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ABSTRACT

To be financially viable, Catholic elementary schools with enrollments of under 100 students need to recognize their smallness and seek structures and methods appropriate to their size. This book addresses the needs of very small schools with current or potential multigrade classrooms, and describes organizational and instructional approaches proven effective in such settings. Researchers obtained information from questionnaire responses of 164 of the 462 U.S. Catholic elementary schools with enrollments under 100, meetings with 34 principals of very small schools judged to be effective academic or financial models, and a survey of relevant literature in the ERIC data base. Major sections cover (1) advantages related to academic success, personal development, and community climate in the small Catholic elementary school; (2) key elements in organizing the school program, including school leadership, financial considerations, curriculum, supportive technology, community learning climate, and recruitment of qualified teachers; (3) 14 steps for effectively teaching in the multigrade classroom, including consideration of schoolwide priorities and resources, classroom arrangement, planning, and professional growth; and (4) compensation for limitations of size and resources through involvement of community members and collaboration with other institutions and agencies. This document contains 40 references and lists of questionnaire respondents and meeting participants. (SV)

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The Small Catholic Elementary School:

Advantages and Opportunities

by Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D.

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the National Catholic Educational Association

The Small Catholic Elementary School:

Advantages and Opportunities

by Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D.

Based on the Small Schools Study

Co-Directed by
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and
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Preface

Each day as a child in Collegeville, Minnesota, 46 of us walked from our scattered homes to the parish chapel for a 30-minute Mass, boys on the left and girls on the right. The first grade sat in the front pew and the eighth grade in the eighth.

Because of the way our seating was arranged, I stared at the body of St. Peregrine every weekday of those grade-school years, and I spent the next seven hours of the day in a four-grade classroom with a German Franciscan nun who managed to give each of the four grades an hour's worth of learning in 15 minutes of instruction. It was a small Catholic school in Public School District 120.

Those years gave me a foundation for my life that I would never trade. I was blessed, because for me this special community provided my home, recreation, relationships, education, religion, challenge, my almost risk-free setting for growth. All I needed was within easy reach.

I will never forget the lessons and values I learned as a child in those classrooms; they are a part of me today.

Dave Durenberger
United States Senator

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- Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN, who co-directed the Small Schools Study, the basis for this publication;
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- Finally — and most importantly — all the educators whose energy and expertise continue to offer opportunities for academic success, personal development, and community climate within small Catholic schools.

The Small Catholic Elementary School: Advantages and Opportunities

Page

Chapter I. Reassessing Smallness 1

Chapter II. Recognizing Advantages 9
Academic Success 10
Personal Development 16
Community Climate 17

Chapter III. Organizing the School Efficiently 21
School Leadership 23
Financial Considerations 25
School Curriculum 27
Supportive Technology 43
Community Climate for Learning 46
Qualified Teachers 50

Chapter IV. Teaching the Students Effectively 59
Learning about the School 60
Assessing Needs of Old and New Students 64
Outlining the Year's Curriculum 65
Planning Groups and Individualization 68
Locating Related Resources 70
Outlining Expectations and Growth Plans 76
Assessing Volunteer Potential 78
Arranging the Classroom 79
Planning the Week 86
Setting the Day's Climate 89
Adapting the Standard Lesson Plan 90
Reassessing at Reporting Time 96
Meeting Parents and Community 96
Growing Professionally 97

Chapter V. Reaching Beyond the School 99
Involving Community Members 100
Collaborating with Other Agencies 102
Marketing and Public Relations 105

Chapter VI. Considering Implications 109

Appendix A Participants in Regional Meetings 111
Appendix B Respondents to Questionnaire 112

References 117

Chapter I

Reassessing Smallness

Small Catholic schools offer a remarkable level of academic achievement and a special learning environment. Their story, reflected in this publication, holds implications for other very small schools — private, religious, and public — as well as for small Catholic schools.

This chapter answers five introductory questions:

A. What is a "Small" Catholic school?

B. Is Bigger Better?

C. Why This Publication?

D. What Is Its Basis?

E. What are the Major Sections?

A. What is a "Small" Catholic School?

"Small" is a comparative term. Most available studies about small schools treat public schools with enrollments of 300 or less; in fact, the enrollment figure most commonly accepted to identify small elementary schools is 300 or less (Barker, 1986a). The following data show why that definition of "smallness" is not useful for the small Catholic school. The data indicate that a "small" Catholic school is best defined as 100 students or less.

The following chart of data for Catholic elementary schools (Bredeweg, 1988) assigns the smallest school category to enrollments "under 300." The fact that 71% or over two-thirds of the schools are "under 300" supports the point that a different measure is needed for the small Catholic school.

Catholic Elementary Schools by Size 1986-87

Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent
Over 500	600	7.8%
300-500	1,631	21.2%
Under 300	5,462	71.0%

1986-87 Total = 7,693

In the last decade, the trend toward smallness has accelerated. The 1975-76 data, compared with 1986-87, indicate the shift from large (over 500) to small (under 300) schools:

Catholic Elementary Schools by Size
Comparison of 1986-87 with 1975-76

	Number		Percent	
	1975-76	1986-87	1975-76	1986-87
Over 500	1,308	600	15.7%	7.8%
300-500	2,074	1,631	24.9%	21.2%
Under 300	4,947	5,462	59.4%	71.0%

1975-76 Total = 8,329 1986-87 Total = 7,693

The data above show that the "under 300" Catholic schools are increasing in both number and percent, now representing almost three-fourths of the total. Moreover, in 1987-88 the Catholic elementary school averaged 255 students (calculated from data in Bredeweg, 1988). When both the mean and the median enrollments fall within the "under 300" category, that category is too broad to describe the "small" school.

Would "200 or fewer" better define the "small" Catholic elementary school? Currently the average student-teacher ratio in the Catholic elementary school is about 21:1 (Bredeweg, 1988). With a similar ratio of 25:1, a school with 200 students can place one grade per classroom and therefore can use standard educational approaches. The "smallness" of the 200-student school does not require different organizational or instructional practices.

When schools enroll about 100 students, however, they face a major choice:

1. to retain the one-grade-per-classroom approach, with a student-teacher ratio of 12:1 or less (a student ratio about half the national average)

or

2. to organize the school for instruction with two or more grades in a classroom.

The cost of twelve or fewer students per classroom is high and prohibitive for most Catholic schools. Even where financing is available for very small single-grade classrooms, the expenditure is unnecessary. Evidence shows that students can learn as much (or even more) in a multi-grade classroom — provided the school organization and the classroom instruction are appropriate for the situation.

When schools initially consider placing two or more grades in one classroom or when new personnel arrive, assistance is often needed. Although other school experience and new technology offer some help, few of today's educators have either direct experience or professional preparation to deal with multi-grade classroom approaches.

For that reason, **this publication will address the needs of the "under 100" schools with current or potential multi-grade classrooms**. This would include, for example, a school that combines Grades 7 and 8 in the same classroom, perhaps Grades 4-6 in another, and Primary 1-3 together.

In summary, Catholic elementary schools under 100, to be financially viable, need to recognize their smallness and seek structures and methods appropriate to their size. For that reason, this publication will define the small Catholic school as "under 100," will focus on multigrade classrooms, and will describe the organizational and instructional approaches that have proven effective in similar settings.

Before providing evidence of the effectiveness of these situations, it is important to recognize why the idea of a small school or multi-grade classrooms may initially receive a negative response.

B. Is Bigger Better?

In the 1950's and 1960's, many argued that consolidated schools offered better economic efficiency and broader educational programs. Faced with those arguments, many small schools disappeared. After three decades of experience, however, those arguments are being reassessed.

According to a summary report of research studies, (ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1982), more efficient use of resources has not been validly documented for larger schools. Other findings suggest that the small school — less complex and more manageable — may show an advantage in efficiently using resources (Sher and Tompkins, 1977).

A Canadian researcher (Marshall, 1984) concludes that —when factors of I.Q. and socio-economic status are balanced —size is only one factor and by itself does not indicate the quality of a school. On the other hand, data on public schools (Eberts, Kehoe, & Stone, 1984) show that the large school has substantially lower achievement than either the small or moderate-size school.

Because of the increasing evidence that small schools can and do achieve as well as larger schools, skepticism of the supposed automatic benefits of the larger school has replaced the unexamined optimism of the 1950's. "Bigger" does not equal "better."

C. Why This Publication?

Most Catholic elementary schools are not increasing in enrollment. Along with other schools, they will feel some effects of declining birth rates till an increased population affects most elementary grades in the late 1980's or early 1990's. Public school districts can mandate consolidations and provide costly busing. In Catholic education, however, smaller numbers, limited resources, and a sense of parish community rarely make consolidation a viable option. As a result, small Catholic school closings and discussions of closings are frequent.

The purpose of this publication and its prior study is to focus on the excellence attainable by the small Catholic school and to assist the increasing number of small Catholic elementary schools (enrollment of 100 or fewer students) in shaping programs that are educationally strong and financially sound. Briefly, the purpose of this effort is to show that "smaller" can be "better."

D. What Is Its Basis?

The Small Schools Study prior to this publication originated in the Department of Elementary Schools, National Catholic Educational Association. Partially funded by the McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education, the study followed six steps:

1. Available Statistics

Using information from the NCEA Data Bank and Market Data Retrieval, small Catholic elementary schools were identified. To assure attention to very small schools which were likely to have multi-grade classrooms, the study located only elementary schools with an enrollment of 100 or fewer students in 8-grade schools or an average of 12.5 students or fewer per grade. A Grade 1-6 school, for example, would have been included if it enrolled fewer than 6 times 12.5 or 75 students.

How many Catholic elementary schools in the United States enroll fewer than one hundred students? At the beginning of this study, in 1985, exactly 462 Catholic elementary schools had under 100 students or an average below 12.5 per grade.

Over three-fourths of these schools (352 of 462) are located in thirteen states:

Wisconsin	55	Nebraska	23
Missouri	40	Minnesota	22
Pennsylvania	34	Ohio	19
Illinois	33	Kansas	18
Michigan	28	Indiana	16
New York	26	Iowa	13
Kentucky	25		

2. Questionnaires

Questionnaires to these identified small schools
a. requested confirmation of grades and enrollment data;
b. asked information about number of classroom teachers, per-pupil expense, and student achievement scores;
c. asked principals for an assessment of the school's educational and financial strength.

3. Study of Responses

Questionnaires were completed and returned by 164 schools, listed in Appendix B. Study of the available standardized test data determined that over 90% of the reporting small schools were achieving very well academically and that many were doing so at the national per-pupil cost of $1,072 in 1985-86 (Bredeweg, 1987).

4. Identification of Sites and Models

Further study indicated which geographic centers could serve as meeting points for leaders whose schools were judged to be effective academic and/or financial models. The selected sites were in or bordering the top five states in the location list:

Fulton, Missouri;
Greensburg, Pennsylvania;
Kaukauna (Holland), Wisconsin;
Ozora (St. Mary's), Missouri;
Shepherd, Michigan.

5. Meeting Agenda

Small Schools Study Co-Directors Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN, and Carleen Reck, SSND, met with the principals of thirty-four selected small schools in the five geographic centers. The full-day meetings treated a variety of topics:

organization
curriculum
teaching methods
materials and equipment
use of personnel including student assistance
provision for slower and more advanced students
collaborative efforts beyond the school

teacher preparation
parental and community involvement
sources of financing and
greatest needs.

A list of participating schools and educators is included in Appendix A.

6. Further Study

Areas in which needs were expressed, but not answered sufficiently within the schools, determined the basis for further study. Much of this study was facilitated by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Based on the meetings and study described above, this publication affirms that small Catholic schools can be effective and can hold many advantages over larger schools. Moreover, this publication offers the small school community much information about organizational and instructional approaches which will allow a sound academic program within the small school at an average-per-student cost.

E. What are the Major Sections?

Succeeding chapters will treat each of the following:

II. Recognizing Advantages

Chapter II will consider the advantages related to the academic success, personal development, and community climate of the small Catholic elementary school.

III. Organizing the School Efficiently

Chapter III will treat key elements in organizing the school program: school leadership, financial considerations, school curriculum, supportive technology, community climate for learning, and qualified teachers. This section will be of special interest to principals.

IV. Teaching the Students Effectively

Chapter IV considers fourteen steps for effectively teaching in the multi-grade classroom. These practical pages include areas such as learning about the school, arranging the classroom, and growing professionally. This chapter will be of special interest to teachers.

V. Reaching Beyond the School

Chapter V reviews many of the ways a small Catholic school can compensate for its limitations of size and resources by involving community members, collaborating with other agencies, and assuring good public relations with the various groups within the community.

VI. Considering Implications

Chapter VI summarizes the key points of the publication, emphasizing the urgency that they be heeded by small Catholic schools to guarantee the future availability of these schools.

Chapter II.

Recognizing Advantages

Over twenty years ago, two researchers (Barker and Gump, 1964) proposed the "inside-outside perceptual paradox" — which stated that even though larger high schools were more impressive on the outside, upon closer scrutiny the smaller schools provided a better quality of education.

The closer scrutiny of Catholic elementary schools during the Small Schools Study indicated many advantages which reflect and support quality education. Although these advantages often interrelate, they will be considered in three areas:

A. Academic Success

B. Personal Development

C. Community Climate.

A. Academic Success

The academic record of small Catholic schools will be described objectively by achievement scores and then will be explained somewhat more subjectively by listing the learning advantages which are evident in the small school.

1. Achievement Scores

Although standardized achievement tests cannot reflect all aspects of learning, they nevertheless serve as objective indicators of academic success. How do these small Catholic schools score on standardized achievement tests?

The Small Schools Study of Catholic elementary schools indicates that 94% of the composite class averages (144 of the 153 reported) are on or above grade level. Moreover, the median class average on the composite achievement score increases through the grades — with the eighth grade composite score 1.8 years above the national norm. In other words, the longer a class studies in a small Catholic school, the higher the group composite score tends to rise above the expected level. See Table 1.

Table 1 — CLASS COMPOSITE ACHIEVEMENT SCORES SMALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

	% of Class Averages On/Above Grade Level	Median Class Average in Years G.E.+/- Norm
Grade 1	100%	+ .4
Grade 2	95%	+ .4
Grade 3	88%	+ .6
Grade 4	96%	+ .6
Grade 5	96%	+1.1
Grade 6	95%	+1.1
Grade 7	94%	+1.6
Grade 8	93%	+1.8

The greater-than-expected achievement is also evident in the subtest to measure reading with 92% of the reading class averages (418 of the 456 reported) on or above grade level. Again the median class average increases through the grades with eighth grade reading 1.8 years above the national norm. See Table 2.

Table 2 — CLASS AVERAGE OF READING SCORES SMALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

	% of Class Averages On/Above Grade Level	Median Class Average in Years G.E.+/- Norm
Grade 1	86%	+ .4
Grade 2	89%	+ .5
Grade 3	90%	+ .6
Grade 4	96%	+1.1
Grade 5	94%	+1.1
Grade 6	94%	+1.2
Grade 7	91%	+1.8
Grade 8	93%	+1.8

Reference skills score even higher with 96% of the class averages in this subtest (79 of 82 reported) on or above the grade level. The median class averages range from 1.5 to 2.0 grades above the national norm. See Table 3.

Table 3 —
CLASS AVERAGE OF REFERENCE SKILLS SCORES SMALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

	% of Class Averages On/Above Grade Level	Median Class Average in Years G.E.+/- Norm
Grade 5	96%	+2.0
Grade 6	96%	+1.5
Grade 7	100%	+1.7
Grade 8	94%	+2.0

Mathematics — though not as striking — scores significantly above the expected norms with 87% of the mathematics class averages (340 of the 389 reported) on or above grade level. The median class averages range from .4 grade above the norm in the primary to 1.8 grades above expected scoring in the eighth grade. See Table 4.

Table 4 — CLASS AVERAGE OF MATHEMATICS SCORES
SMALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

	% of Class Averages On/Above Grade Level	Median Class Average in Years G.E.+/- Norm
Grade 1	86%	+ .4
Grade 2	76%	+ .4
Grade 3	83%	+ .6
Grade 4	90%	+ .6
Grade 5	93%	+ .8
Grade 6	87%	+ .7
Grade 7	92%	+1.6
Grade 8	94%	+1.8

The above tables show that classes in small Catholic schools score exceptionally well in all of the basic learning areas. Although these classes do not include students with moderate to severe handicapping conditions, they include a broad spectrum of ability levels.

Compared with students in larger Catholic schools (which average one to two years above national norms), these classes get a slower start — perhaps because of the limited educational opportunities in the rural area — then gradually match or surpass their peer classes in larger schools.

During the regional meetings of the Small Schools Study, school representatives frequently gave specific examples of achievement, such as the following:

- "Our graduates are only 17% of the public high school population, but they form 35-40% of the National Honor Society and 60% of the year-end honor roll."

- "When our students participate in the regional summer school, most are placed a grade ahead."

- "We graduate only 5 or 6 students per year who join students from many larger schools at the public high school. In the past five years, two of our graduates were class valedictorians and three were salutatorians."

- "One of our eighth graders had the opportunity to take the SAT. He scored over 500 and now regularly receives scholarship and fellowship offers."

2. **Learning Advantages**

Participants in the Small Schools Study repeatedly named advantages related to the academic growth of their students. Some stem from the students' learning within multi-grade classrooms; others relate to the small number of students per grade or the small number of students in school.

When students share a classroom with students in a higher and/or lower grade, they experience several learning advantages. The most commonly noted advantages follow:

a. *Year-long Preview/Review*

First of all, students in multi-grade classrooms have a built-in system to assure that they can preview the expectations for their coming year and/or have second hearings to clarify and strengthen the prior year's learning.

b. *Availability of Varied Levels*

Moreover, students who are not working on their own grade level have more opportunities to work with a lower level for reinforcement or a higher group for challenge than their peers who are isolated within a single-grade classroom. The mix of varied ages — especially in classrooms where several grades work together — more closely approximates the natural mix of different ages in their families and communities which promoted their rapid learning as pre-schoolers.

c. *Required Use of Reading and Reference Skills*

Skill development requires repeated use. In today's changing world, the need to learn on one's own — after formal schooling may end — is becoming increasingly important. The fact that students in multi-grade classrooms must spend a greater portion of their time learning without immediate teacher direction forces them to utilize reading and reference skills more than their peers who can rely more heavily upon teacher summaries.

These experiences — preview/review, cross-age learning, and utilization for skill development — have been associated with sound learning in any setting. Many classrooms offer some or all of these opportunities; the multi-grade classroom, however, requires their regular use on a day-to-day basis.

Multi-grade classrooms are possible only when each of the grades has a small number of students. The smaller number working in the same area (e.g., fifth grade math or seventh grade language arts) facilitates individual assessment and promotes active learning.

d. *Teacher Knowledge of the Individual Student*

The necessity of the teacher knowing the strengths and needs of each student has impelled some schools to initiate complicated, often computerized, record keeping systems. The small number of students per grade in the small school (usually 13 or less) simplifies the teacher's task of keeping track of each youngster's strengths and needs. Although the teacher spends less time with each grade in a multi-grade setting, the individual attention given to each student and the knowledge of each student is ordinarily greater.

e. *Active Learning*

In multi-grade classrooms, the Small Schools Study learned of extremely limited use of teacher lecture, an instructional method which can contribute to student passivity. Rather, students in small schools tend to be involved actively: studying as individuals, responding to the teacher's Socratic questioning, and participating within class discussions. Indeed the longer time available for student work (while the teacher directly instructs the other grade/s) presses the teacher to find a variety of learning materials and tasks which will keep the students actively involved for these longer work periods.

f. *Higher Levels of Thinking*

In higher-level thinking, the questions generally are short and the answers are long — a perfect combination for the teacher with a small number of students (and papers) at one level.

According to the Small Schools Study participants, a higher-than-average percentage of teachers in multi-grade situations assign tasks and construct test questions that are open-ended rather than matching, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank items. Their assignments tend to push students beyond factual knowledge to higher levels of thinking and beyond the textbook to a variety of reference materials. Testing tends to require information in complete written form (sentences, paragraphs, or essay tests) or through spoken reports.

Teachers in any situation can provide this level of work; the circumstances with a small class, however, provide added motivation and rationale to do so.

Anyone can replicate these parts of the Small Schools Study. One could, for example, ask several teachers with average-size single grades in their rooms to specify the strengths and needs of randomly selected students (e.g., in fifth-grade math or seventh-grade language arts), and then compare the results when asking the question of several teachers within their multi-grade classrooms.

One could also observe the level of active learning and the form of student testing in the single-grade room compared with the multi-grade classroom.

The fact that a school enrolls a small number of students facilitates student learning in several additional ways.

g. *Greater Access to Available Programs*

Although larger schools may offer a broader spectrum of mini-courses and educational activities, the students in a smaller school stand a greater chance of being able to participate in the smaller number of such learning opportunities offered. The percent of participation in these learning activities tends to be much higher; in the small school, a higher percent of students, for example, will participate in the special session with the weather forecaster or use the new computer program or prepare for the spelling bee.

h. *Flexibility and Mobility*

The ease of adjusting the schedule of a small school often enables students to experience a special educational event or assembly. Transporting a small group for a field trip can also occur without extensive planning. Many small schools have ready access to nature, to farm animals, to agriculture, and to wild life — often a short walk from the classroom door.

i. *Characteristics of Effective Schools*

A professor in a college of education (Stephens, 1987) finds that many small rural schools exhibit features that the past decade of research has established as characteristic of effective schools: small classes, individual attention, low dropout rates, a safe, orderly environment, strong faculty identity and commitment, active parental interest, and strong community support. The promotion of such characteristics is behind many proposals in the current excellence in education movement; undoubtedly the same characteristics are related to the academic growth in many small rural schools.

Both the actual scores from standardized achievement tests and the list of specific learning advantages present a clear picture of academic success for the small Catholic elementary schools in the United States.

B. Personal Development

Obviously some of the above academic achievements involve personal growth. Because of their frequent and consistent emphasis during the Small Schools Study, however, two areas of personal development will be treated specifically: responsibility and self-esteem.

1. Responsibility

Students in small schools experience frequent opportunities and expectations to be responsible — in terms of study as well as in general work.

a. *Work Habits*

In multi-grade situations, students must work without direct teacher assistance for a significant part of the school day. As a result, students have more frequent opportunities to follow directions, to complete a task by themselves, to work for sustained periods without interruptions. These youngsters are more likely to develop the ability to concentrate and to work independently. Moreover, they have regular opportunities to learn that they are able to meet challenges if they keep working.

b. *Opportunities to Assist and Lead*

Similar numbers of leadership positions and responsibilities exist in all schools. Regardless of the number of students, for example, only one flag will be raised. An enrollment of fewer students means that each student has a greater chance for opportunities to develop leadership and personal maturity.

In many small schools, students teach each other computer skills and serve as trouble shooters — tasks often relegated to an aide in a larger setting. Even simple tasks such as helping to serve lunch and deliver the milk — which are more likely to be delegated to students in small schools — can help to develop habits of responsibility.

2. Self-Esteem

Psychologists and experience indicate that self-esteem is increased by the sense of being needed and useful. The small school, because of its size, has added opportunities to build student self-esteem.

a. *Need for Everyone*

Whenever a team is formed or a cast chosen in the small school, a student finds there is always room for one more. In fact, often literally everyone is needed to proceed with an activity.

b. *Opportunities to be Useful*

The multi-grade classroom with more flexible student scheduling offers more opportunities for students to tutor other youngsters and to assist teachers and other school staff. This situation not only contributes to student responsibility as noted above, but is ideal for showing the students their usefulness to others, a key element in building self-concept.

Although the evidence of greater personal development in terms of responsibility and self-esteem is largely anecdotal (rather than some form of standardized measure), the findings can be confirmed by personal experience within small Catholic schools, by additional interviews with personnel within the schools, or by comparative assessments within the high schools which receive these elementary graduates.

C. Community Climate

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management (1982), when reviewing the literature about parental preference regarding school size, summarized its findings: "Parents have long favored smaller schools, particularly when those schools can be considered neighborhood schools." The "neighborhood" or "community" climate of the small Catholic school is evident and is related to several factors.

1. **Descriptors and Factors of Community Climate**

Participants in the Small Schools Study described their schools in these community-related terms:

each student is known by name;
awareness and interest extend beyond academic areas;
students and faculty interact frequently;
parents have easier access to principal and teachers;
the whole school can gather easily.
One student expressed well the climate, "We all belong."

Although some of the above descriptors could be heard in some larger schools, several factors within the small school contribute to the community climate; namely, the smaller numbers, the closer working relationships and — in the case of the small school within the rural or town setting — the close family relationships and the centrality of the church/school within community activities.

2. Related Advantages

In general, the characteristics of community climate contribute to a positive school setting:

a. *Family Atmosphere*

In the small school, where every staff member knows every student by name, communications and procedures can be less formal, more spontaneous, less regimented. In the small community, brothers, sisters, and cousins can naturally help and support one another. Youngsters of different ages can associate with each other without seeming out of place.

b. *Easy Access to Faculty*

Not only do teachers know each student, but students know the principal and each teacher. They find no maze of bureaucracy; rather, they regularly relate with the key people in the school, totally at ease talking with adults — a rare phenomenon in many larger settings. Students interact more frequently and more informally with their teachers than in the larger school. Observation shows that parents also feel very free to ask for help when a staff member is available.

c. *All-School Activities*

The number in the whole school often allows everyone to be in the picture — literally — in photos, projects, celebrations, dramatic presentations, sports, etc. One school has youngsters from Grades 2 through 8 on the same soccer team — "and they all look out for each other." In most small schools, the whole faculty or even the whole student body can easily gather for a moment of praying, singing, or wishing a happy birthday.

d. *Simpler, More Natural Supervision*

Administrators of small schools are more likely to be out of the office, in the classrooms, with the students and teachers on a regular basis. Many principals can literally stand in one spot and closely observe every activity within the school. Knowing every student by name — an easier task in the small school — contributes remarkably to an atmosphere conducive to learning.

e. *Cooperative Administration*

Because the principal of a small school often shares in teaching duties, the teachers ordinarily share in some administrative tasks. This involvement requires daily communication and planning (which usually occurs in brief sessions in the hallway) which, in turn, diminishes the need for much paperwork or detailed regulations.

One study of school size (Eberts et al, 1984) finds that small schools show a greater tendency to cooperation among the staff members. Teachers who are so involved know they have a voice and report a high level of teacher morale. Principals working closely with three or four teachers say that they thoroughly know the abilities of their faculty and can therefore use their talents more effectively than if they worked with eight or more teachers.

f. *Interpersonal Relations*

In general, staffs from small schools mix frequently on both a professional and social basis. Moreover, for schools in rural or town communities, it is not unusual for teachers, principal, and school board members to know each other well. These interpersonal relationships can accelerate the building of the broader school community.

g. *Parental Involvement*

Representatives of the schools in the Small Schools Study agreed that parents seem to volunteer more within a small school setting. All who are contacted are willing to respond to a variety of needs: to bake cinnamon rolls, build playgrounds, write computer programs, construct tables. Many schools reported 100% attendance as standard for parent/teacher conferences. Because of the smaller numbers of children and parents involved, many schools offer regular occasions on which parents may join their children for lunch, prayer, or other activities.

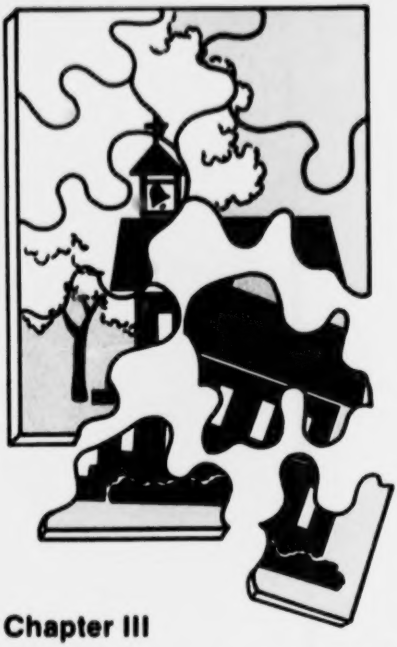
h. *Centrality to Community Activities*

In the rural and town communities, the school regularly assumes leadership within church liturgies and activities. An integral part of the parish, the school also plays a central role in community activities. In return, the school can expect the town officers and agencies to respond readily to any school request. That builds an enviable community spirit, rarely possible in a larger setting.

As with any school, each small Catholic school has individual traits. In general, though, these small schools display characteristics of community climate which clearly can contribute to a positive school setting.

In keeping with the "inside-outside perceptual paradox" described at the beginning of this chapter, even though larger schools may be more impressive on the outside, upon closer scrutiny, smaller schools can provide an equal or better quality of education. They can offer advantages in the areas of academic success, personal development, and community climate.

It will come as no surprise that some potential disadvantages also exist. The next two chapters will suggest how to counteract the potential organizational and instructional disadvantages while capitalizing on the many advantages of smallness.



Chapter III

Organizing the School Efficiently

The small school has many advantages — but the fact remains that it is small. As such, special forms of organization are more likely to be efficient; certain strategies can overcome shortcomings which are sometimes associated with the small school and convert potential disadvantages to advantages.

This chapter will consider basic educational areas in terms of the total school; the next chapter will treat similar areas within the classroom. Although this chapter emphasizes the role of the principal and the next section focuses on the task of the teacher, total school organization and classroom instruction require combined principal-teacher efforts in any school.

The ideas in this chapter are based on two sources:

- the practices of the effective small schools involved in the Small Schools Study;
- research findings about other small schools.

Granted, many organizational ideas that are important for small schools also apply to some extent to larger schools. This chapter presents factors that are *especially important within the small school, not* factors that are *important only for the small school.*

Six areas related to overall school organization will be considered:

A. School Leadership

B. Financial Considerations

C. School Curriculum

D. Supportive Technology

E. Community Climate for Learning

F. Qualified Teachers

A. School Leadership

In a study by the National Center for Smaller Schools (Beckner DeGuire, Pederson, & Vattakavanich, 1983), the top ten needs clustered around issues of school administration and classroom management —areas which are dependent upon local leadership. The following consideration of local leadership includes six dimensions: abilities, orientation, focus, administrative time, structure, and communication.

1. Abilities

Effective small school principals — in studies, interviews, and articles — reflect these leadership abilities:

a. to personify commitment to the school;
b. to influence both the school as a whole and the classrooms;
c. to set a positive direction for the future;
d. to inspire and enable others to join fully in the venture;
e. to promote educational approaches which — though not necessarily standard — suit the needs of the students and community.

2. Orientation

The leadership of small schools emphasizes a different application of abilities than in larger schools. For that reason, as soon as educators —whose only or recent experience relates to larger schools — contract to administer small schools, they should observe at least two small schools where the principals are considered successful. Dioceses can support principals who are newly appointed to small schools by pairing new principals with experienced mentor principals or by encouraging informal regional sessions of small-school principals.

3. Focus

The focus of these principals extends beyond themselves:

a. as school leaders who are instrumental in building a family spirit among the small numbers in the school;
b. as instructional leaders who draw attention to the successes of their teachers who often feel the burden of preparing for multiple grades;
c. as community leaders who always manage to be available for the social moments common to small towns and rural communities — the site of most small schools.

4. Administrative Time

When student enrollment totals less than one hundred, most principals can administer the school on a part- or half-time basis. Ordinarily these principals teach during the remaining time. In some cases, a principal is contracted parttime, with additional time spent as parish director of religious education, as principal of a second school or early childhood center, in homemaking or semi-retirement. When the principal is not present, a delegated teacher or vice-principal handles needs that require immediate attention, e.g.,

a. emergencies such as accidents, severe and sudden health problems, major weather changes;

b. approval of any student or faculty arrivals or departures, either previously approved by the principal or of an emergency nature;

c. deliveries of materials which had not been expected;

d. communication regarding urgent matters, e.g., with a police officer checking on a missing student;

e. locking of office files, checking lights, etc.

In some situations a principal is expected to teach fulltime. In this case, the school decision-makers should be aware of the net loss — to both students and staff — resulting from this choice. The principal needs to have some time to supervise classroom instruction, to study curricular needs, and to handle important communication, forms, and planning. Lack of time for these activities can result in poor planning, inefficient purchasing, and ineffective teaching — ultimately costing the school more than the investment in a part-time teacher.

5. Structure

Regardless of the principal's available time, the administration of a small school better fits the setting when it capitalizes on personal relationships rather than on bureaucratic procedures.

When the principal holds some teaching responsibilities, many administrative tasks will be shared with the teachers, e.g., coordination of bus schedules, organizing playground supervision, scheduling events, planning the Christmas show. The result can be team leadership, an opportunity to work together which can foster teacher initiative and give a sense of ownership.

6. Communication

In the small school — just as in the small town — every word spreads quickly. To guarantee accurate messages as well as involvement and basic personal support for each staff member, many small faculties meet for a few minutes every morning for brief updates and adjustments. These gatherings of three to five minutes, of course, only supplement the regular longer sessions for planning and evaluation.

These are some considerations about the leader in the small school. The following areas — though not identified specifically with the leader —also rely heavily on the principal's personal leadership.

B. Financial Considerations

1. Basic Ratio Factor

Basically 80% of a typical small Catholic school budget pays instructional staff costs. Obviously Catholic school salaries — which are consistently and considerably lower than public school salaries — cannot be cut; in fact, in many situations — with an awareness of justice issues for all involved — they must be increased.

The only way to substantially cut or control small school costs is to keep the student/teacher ratio as close as possible to the national average of 21:1 (Bredeweg, 1988). The Small Schools Study which preceded this publication analyzed costs of small Catholic schools. Although comparisons cannot be exact (because of varying treatment of plant costs, contributed services, etc.), only those schools which neared an average student/teacher ratio of about 20:1 could also near the average per-student cost of about $1,100 (Bredeweg, 1987). Some of the other schools (e.g., with 9:1 ratio @ $2,000 per-student cost) were closed before the study was completed.

This publication aims to help prepare principals and to organize and equip schools so that effective learning can occur with average student/teacher ratios and consequently with near-average cost-per-student.

2. Sources of Income

Before considering cash income sources, the contributed service of Catholic school teachers and principals should be recognized. A simple calculation of the Catholic school teacher salary — often 75% to 85% of public school salary — divided by about 180 school days will show the teacher's daily contribution. For example, 80% of a $20,000 public school base salary equals a salary of $16,000, a difference of $4,000; this difference, divided by 180 school days, equals $22 as a daily cash-equivalent contribution to the school/parish. The parish and other school supporters should be apprised of this ongoing contribution,

In terms of cash sources, most Catholic elementary schools regardless of size have traditionally relied on three sources: parish support, minimal tuition, and fundraising. The most recent national figures (Bredeweg, 1987) show the following breakdown of sources for the per-pupil revenue for elementary schools:

Source	Amount	Percent
Tuition and Fees	$ 463	43.2%
Parish Subsidy	460	42.9
Diocesan Subsidy	12	1.1
Fund Raising and Other	137	12.8
Total Per Pupil Revenue	$1072	100.0%

Among the small schools studied, the formula of sources is diverse. Some participants quoted diocesan norms which specify ideal ratios of parish subsidy, tuition, and fund raising; many schools charge specific tuition — on a per-family or per-child basis; some parishes or dioceses charge no tuition, but consider the school as a parish service — supported by the parish like every other service and available to every member of the parish. In the small school — which is often supported by a small parish — each school family and each parishioner represents a higher percent of the support base; any economically depressed or uncommitted family greatly affects the total giving structure.

Busing and books — not provided by all states — often cost as much as the basic tuition; in the rural setting of many small schools, busing is not an option. To secure better cash flow — also a greater problem for small institutions — some schools assess lower book fees if paid early in the year.

One trend seems evident: parishes which have abruptly increased tuition or used high pressure collections have found that these approaches have lost many students, decreasing the school's base of support while maintaining the same expenses. Many schools are now shifting to some plan of "fair share" contributions or to "stewardship" — in terms of work as well as cash. As a whole, the users of a small school — often from rural backgrounds — tend to be very self-sufficient, not willing to complete forms for local processes or for diocesan scholarships. They evidently want either to pay a fair share or to withdraw their children.

In the small town or rural setting of the small school, fundraising events are still common, especially those that are social in nature. One school tells of its thirty-four students raising $7,000 through a picnic, bikeathon, and supper. Another emphasizes that only the home-school members — not the students — sell magazine subscriptions, tickets to special breakfasts, and candy bars.

Many schools, however, are shifting much of their time from fundraising events to long-range planning and development efforts. Instead of earning a few dollars today, they are working toward larger gifts. One school found it possible to raise a $50,000 endowment in one year for a parish school with fifty-nine families represented. One parish volunteer with professional help began an endowment program which now equals $96,000, increasing annually by $5,000. Some dioceses also are investing efforts in development. More dioceses, parishes, and schools are offering legal help with writing wills and inviting deferred giving.

Parishes in which contact has been developed between the young and old are finding financial support — not only from older alumni and friends — but also from grandparents and older parishioners. One parish hall — which houses both the school children eating lunch and the quilting ladies — has seen an increase of little people approaching the quilters and a parallel increase of school support by the senior parishioners.

Many small schools are also the only school in town and regularly benefit from the support of the town council of groups like the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, etc. Some areas that are essential in building school support will be treated in Chapter V within the section on public relations.

C. School Curriculum

Much could be written about curriculum. This section focuses on how to organize the small school so that the learning process can be very effective while classrooms — usually classrooms with multiple grades — maintain an average student/teacher ratio. First come general strategies, then those related to specific subjects.

1. General Strategies

The strategies for organizing the overall school curriculum are these:

a. Set priorities;
b. Teach skill subjects according to readiness levels —
    by a grade when homogeneous,
    by groups — within or across grades,
    individually when needed;
c. Alternate non-skill content;
d. Use interdisciplinary opportunities;
e. Select and index appropriate resources.

Each strategy will be discussed with some practical application.

a. *Set Priorities*

To conserve energy which could be decimated by teaching multiple grades (more than one grade in a classroom), the principal can lead a process to determine priority areas of learning, to identify those concepts and skills which are key to further learning. Experience shows that little correlation exists between effectiveness and time spent on the job, but a high correlation exists between effectiveness and time spent on high-priority objectives.

Knowing that their students will need skills to learn on their own (about half the time in a two- or three-grade classroom), many excellent small schools place priority on and allot extra minutes to basic reading skills at the primary level. Others name several priority areas such as reading, mathematics, and language.

The principal would also ascertain that teachers are clear about their chief academic responsibilities at each level. Knowing those major areas will help them to eliminate unnecessary duplication and to withhold significant time and attention from peripheral items, saving them for enrichment.

b. *Teach Skill Subjects According to Readiness Levels*

Whether a classroom contains one or several grades, skill subjects —such as reading and mathematics — are best taught according to the students' level of achievement and readiness. Most teachers are aware that much educational literature (such as Raze, 1985) recommends the continued and expanded use of individualized instruction and independent study.

Individualizing need not, however, mean teaching students one at a time. It merely means meeting the students at their own levels. Depending on those students, the same level of a skill subject may be taught to all students in a grade, to groups, or to individuals. Standardized testing and observation can suggest the best approach: by a grade when homogeneous; by groups — within or across grades; or individually when needed.

1) by a grade when homogeneous

Sometimes — especially with a small number of youngsters in the same grade — all the students in one grade may share a similar level of readiness. When that happens, the teacher would have all the students in that grade working on the same skills; e.g., all the third graders would be working on the same reading comprehension skills.

When a textbook series is used as a basis for a subject area, it is occasionally possible for a whole grade to skip a total text and proceed to the next book — alone or combined with the students in the next grade. This could occur, for example, when all fourth graders know the basic content of the Grade 4 mathematics text; they could move to the Grade 5 mathematics book. The teacher would determine whether Grade 4 should join Grade 5 for mathematics — or whether they should stay separate, moving at a slower pace.

2) by groups — within or across grades

Individualizing can also occur by grouping those students who have similar readiness levels. The youngsters in a group may be in the same or different grades; the emphasis is on the skills in this "non-graded" approach. The multi-grade room can be ideal for individualizing in this sense because the room contains a broad range of skill levels; e.g., a room with Grades 4-6 would offer a greater variety of groupings for each student than would be possible in a single Grade 4 room.

Sometimes groups with the same skills are within the same room; e.g., all students with Grade 7-8 reading skills are in the Grade 7-8 room. In that case, non-grading for reading can occur easily, with some groups including only Grade 7 students, some a mix of Grade 7-8, others Grade 8 only.

Sometimes, however, student ability levels cross rooms; e.g., in a school with a Grade 5-6 room and a Grade 7-8 room, some Grade 6 and some Grade 7 students share the same reading level. In that case, the school should consider scheduling a certain time for non-graded reading. Similarly, a school could plan a common time for mathematics. This non-graded grouping is a very practical approach because all students can work on their level with a minimum of groups (and therefore preparations) per teacher. For the small school in which teachers already have additional preparations for multi-grade situations, this is an especially important consideration.

3) individually when needed

If an individual student has mastered or lacks a certain set of skills which are markedly different from the grade or the most similar group, that student requires some form of individual help. Although this help can take the form of individual teacher instruction, it can also be peer tutoring or the use of special guided materials. This extra help can either replace or supplement the student's regular group or class work.

Schools which use peer tutoring find that its value extends beyond the help given to individual students. Peer tutoring helps both tutors and tutees develop their basic skills; because of this mutual benefit, some schools plan regular tutoring time for all students — the above-average and the below-average students.

In the multi-grade situation where students have more learning time, peer tutoring is especially appropriate. About a two-grade range (e.g., 3rd graders tutor 1st graders) has proven sound — with tutors sufficiently near the grade in which the skill was taught to remember the teacher's approach, yet far enough beyond the grade for even the slowest students to have mastered the skills.

Regardless of the approach to skill subjects — by grade, by groups within or across grade, or individually — many small schools find it better to retain a standard "grade" identity for the sake of parents while allowing students to work at their best levels. In other words, the school may still refer to students as "Grade 5" even though some may be working with Grade 6 students and others may be using some Grade 4 materials.

c. *Alternate Non-Skill Content*

For efficient use of instructional time, the subjects that are primarily content based may be alternated; e.g., when in the same classroom, both 5th and 6th grades use the 5th grade book this year, the 6th book next year. No reason exists why America must be studied before the world — provided the teacher plans for new vocabulary and needed skills such as map reading.

The need for some foundational skills offers a natural opportunity for paired learning or team learning. A team of 2, 3, or 4 students (combining grades in this case) could work together on a social studies unit, for example, to understand the material and to make applications.

Some schools — rather than alternate books — use only one book for two years; e.g., the Grade 6 science material is extended over two years, assuming that Grade 5 content will be included — focusing on the content of the first units one year, the last units the next year. The higher level text or curricular plan is often selected for this use; if the lower level material is available, related sections may be used for review or for preview prior to the work in the higher level book.

Some schools that have multiple sets of books study some content from each to downplay the grade level of a single book. Some use the texts for both grades within the room — "Cycle A topics" taken from both texts one year, "Cycle B topics" from both texts the next year. Other schools focus on teaching the basic content with students using varied reference works or even some sample textbooks.

When two grades use the same book, the teacher would stress basics with the lower grade, give enrichment to the higher grade, vary assignments when necessary, have different expectations on essay tests, and determine just norms for grading and reporting.

To balance the pressures of higher level textbooks so that a student will always have some easier and some more challenging materials, a school may wish to determine an alternating scale: e.g.,

Science texts will match the year
    (odd-grade texts in odd-numbered years)
    (even-grade texts in even-numbered years).
Social studies texts will not match the year
    (odd-grade texts in even-numbered years)
    (even-grade texts in odd-numbered years).

If two schools choose opposite plans, they can each purchase half of the needed resource materials and alternate them between the two schools.

Some schools combine Grades 1-2 for very basic science and social studies concepts as well as for music, art, and physical education. Others begin combining in Grades 3-4, depending on student abilities. When students cannot handle a fourth grade book (e.g., in language arts), some schools use only the third grade book with the teacher supplementing as needed with the key fourth grade concepts and skills.

More ideas for school-wide plans of alternating content areas are included below with ideas for the specific subject areas. Classroom suggestions related to content areas also are included in Chapter IV.

d. *Use Interdisciplinary Opportunities*

Because teachers in multi-grade classrooms teach the content of two or more grades within the standard-length school day, they can better use their time by combining two or more subject areas in lessons, projects, and field trips. Their classrooms — usually self-contained for at least part of the day — allow the flexibility to integrate subject areas and to provide interdisciplinary experiences.

Some simple examples of combining two subject areas within interdisciplinary opportunities follow:

- drawing or making models of land forms;
- singing songs about mathematics facts;
- reading biographies about an era of historic characters;
- making graphs of scientific observations;
- relating needed language arts skills to presentations such as schoolwide Poetry Day, parish plays, Christmas program.

One teacher led a field trip that combined many areas:

- observing the ecosystem around a lake;
- using metrics to measure out a small scale Milky Way Galaxy — with the lake representing the sun, and students assuming positions of all the planets;
- exercising with a parachute while observing the effects of air and motion.

Although interdisciplinary experiences often are initiated to save instructional time, they also effect broader, deeper, more life-related learning.

e. *Select and Index Appropriate Resources*

After objectives are clear, the faculty can together select any new school-wide materials; this joint selection can assure continuity and articulation from one level to another. Besides the ordinary commercial materials, schools may wish to check for appropriate material through the National Diffusion Network (Rural Education Association, 1987). Although some costs are required to implement these programs, they are ordinarily less than for commercial programs. The basic cost includes training (which can be shared with other area schools) and materials.

Sample programs from the National Diffusion Network (NDN) follow:

ACTIVE: All Children Totally Involved in Exercising — a diagnostic/prescriptive Grades K-9 physical education program that provides teachers with the skills, strategies, and attitudes necessary to initiate a physical activity program for handicapped and normal individuals.

BOOKS AND BEYOND: A program for Grades K-8 that improves the reading skills of students by motivating them to read more and watch TV less.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS PROGRAM: A complete Grade K-6 mathematics curriculum from basics to problem solving for students of all ability levels.

Information about these and other programs is available through NDN catalogs and state NDN facilitators' offices.

Because small schools often lack librarians and central libraries, important resources can remain in classroom closets and in rarely visited storage rooms. A simple index system of all learning resources in the school, developed by the faculty members, can be very useful. Ideally it would include all learning resources in the school —computer software, video programs, filmstrips, audio-tapes, records, kits, and games as well as books if these are not already catalogued in some way. Sample entries might be as follows:

MATH COMPUTER PROGRAM

Teasers by Tobbs
Gives addition and multiplication practice
— intermediate, jr. high

ALPHABET VIDEO TAPES

Sesame Street
Teaches one letter per program
— primary

SUN LAB KIT

Solar Energy Lab
Offers 25 projects using solar energy
— junior high

If other sources of learning materials — area libraries or resource centers — do not supply easy-to-read catalogs, the school may wish to integrate records of these community materials with their own resources.

2. Considerations for Specific Subjects

Although teachers are responsible for classroom instruction in specific subjects, some overall planning is essential if the school wishes to adapt the standard diocesan/state curriculum to accommodate multigrade classrooms or to meet the span of student abilities across classrooms.

Basically any decision that reaches beyond the individual classroom must be made at the school level. The ideas that follow are merely suggestions of the many possible variations in the following specific subjects:

religion
mathematics
reading
language arts
spelling
science
social studies
art, music, PE
other

RELIGION

Because diocesan directives affect preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist, those classes will not be treated here. Aside from Sacramental preparation, many schools teach the same religion course to two grades. They find that most textbooks can be combined and alternated for two-grade classrooms: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8.

One principal wrote her school's own religion curriculum. Although some development continues through the grades on basic areas such as sacraments and creed, the curriculum indicates specific key areas for focus in each double-grade classroom:

1-2 Sacraments, Liturgy, personal prayers
3-4 Corporal/Spiritual Works of mercy, Jesus, Saints
5-6 Scripture — Old Testament/New Testament, Holy Land maps
7-8 Church History, Holy Spirit

The school integrates varied religion activities with other skills, with students presenting, for example, parable plays on videotape. Instead of selecting a Religion series, then determining how they will teach it in their double-grade classrooms, they exemplify the approach of determining appropriate focus areas for each classroom, then identifying useful texts or other material.

Other schools rotate the religion areas in their combined upper grades by selecting appropriate individual booklets from available sets that treat topics such as Tradition, Mystery, Ministry, Call to Witness, etc.

Another approach is to use a three-year cycle in Religion — with needed adaptation for students preparing for first sacraments:

Year 1 — Sacraments for all according to capacity
Year 2 — Commandments for all according to capacity
Year 3 — Creed for all according to capacity
Year 4 — Sacraments. . . .

If sufficient materials are available and all teachers appropriately qualified, this cycle could be considered on a schoolwide basis; i.e., all classrooms would study sacraments in Year 1. This approach would allow common sacramental themes in liturgies, on school bulletin boards, in school-wide Advent preparation, etc.

If materials deter the school-wide approach, a three-year cycle could be adapted on a classroom basis. One example of such a plan follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4. . .
Classroom with Grades 1-3	Sacraments	Commandments	Creed	Sacraments
Classroom with Grades 4-6	Commandments	Creed	Sacraments	Commandments
Classroom with Grades 7-8	Creed	Sacraments	Commandments	Creed

This plan will assure that every student focuses on each area at least two times within elementary school.

MATHEMATICS

Because mathematics skills are easily measured, this subject lends itself very well to working according to specific skill objectives. Ideally the total faculty will accept and utilize one schoolwide series of skill objectives. These objectives need not be developed anew by the faculty, but may be based on any of the following:

- diocesan or state curriculum guides;

- the mathematics textbook scope and sequence charts and the objectives specified for each unit;

- the skills diagnosed by the standardized testing adopted by the school;

- one of the objective-based kits, computer management programs, or published management systems for individualizing.

The faculty — after determining one schoolwide set of mathematics skill objectives — may also want to consider some common approach for helping students with special needs and for offering enrichment to others. This could, for example, mean one of the following:

- the use of a textbook series with basic and enrichment tracks;
- computer programs with varied levels;
- classroom practice materials and games for all levels, etc.

With the flexibility of a small school, the faculty may also wish to discuss the possibility of superior students working with a higher grade; e.g., excellent Grade 6 students could study Grade 7 math, with algebra available in some form (possibly programmed texts, computer program, or video lessons) by the time the students reach eighth grade.

Another consideration for multi-grade situations (where teachers are not always available) is the importance of materials that help students check their own work.

READING

As indicated in the above discussion of priorities, many small schools with multi-grade classrooms — aware that students will be working with less teacher assistance — emphasize reading and reference skills as means to needed skills for student learning.

Besides allotting more time for reading in the early grades, it is important to determine a school-wide progression of reading/phonics skills. As with the mathematics skill objectives, the reading/phonics skills may be based on one or more of the following:

- diocesan or state curriculum guides;

- the reading textbook series scope and sequence chart and objectives specified for each unit;

- the reading/phonics/reference skills measured in the school's standardized testing program;

- an objective-based kit, computer management program, or published management system for individualizing reading.

This approach helps teachers focus on student mastery of specific learning objectives rather than on merely "covering" certain pages or books.

In addition, the total faculty can determine other school-wide approaches to strengthen reading and reference skills. Examples of some school approaches follow:

- assignment of a half-hour reading for all students each night to read such books as the Newberry Award winners and children's classics;
- a Sustained Silent Reading period daily; e.g., 15-20 minutes after lunch for all — students and teachers;
- regular student use of computerized practice in basic reading skills;
- regular reference work and book reports on appropriate levels for all grades.

Teachers may wish to decide which sets of books and reference materials should be introduced and promoted in each classroom.

To better meet varied student levels, the principal may wish to propose to the faculty a non-graded or cross-graded reading program. If this approach (described above in "groups — within or across grades") is warranted by the widespread reading levels of the current students and if all teachers are well qualified to teach reading, a common time would be scheduled for reading; e.g., at 9:20 a.m. all students go to their assigned classrooms and groups for reading — based on their reading skill rather than on their year in school.

In some schools, those who finish their readers then begin literature which is taught in a three-year cycle; some students move into literature for all three years, while others complete their basic reading skills in time for one or two years of literature. Other schools establish the Junior Great Books Program for students working above level, offering the sessions with trained parent leaders.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Many multi-grade classrooms combine the grades for English, teaching the same basic skills but differentiating assignments and expectations; students across two or three grade levels can learn or review some element such as adverb usage or descriptive paragraphs, then practice the skill at their own levels.

Ordinarily writing skills are taught and developed as part of an integrated language arts program, combining composition with needed practice of usage lessons or punctuation skills. Many teachers in multi-grade classrooms prefer materials that integrate the many language arts areas. The rationale is the same as for interdisciplinary learning: the more often that separate concepts or skills can be combined for teaching and practice, the more efficiently can the limited instructional time be utilized.

As part of some language arts programs, older students work with younger students — taking dictation of stories, telling or reading stories, preparing plays. The availability of multiple grades within a single room or the flexible planning which is possible within the small school can facilitate these cross-aged learning opportunities.

SPELLING

Another school-wide decision relates to the spelling program. Of all subjects, spelling is most frequently named as one which students in multi-grade classrooms can learn with a bare minimum of teacher time — allowing more time for areas that need more direct teacher assistance.

Some approaches which are used by small schools follow:

- students use standard spellers with unit words, but learn words and take tests by using computers or tape recorders;
- when the standard words are mastered, students progress to lists of "challenge" spelling words;
- schools develop their own spelling units based on lists of frequently used or often-misspelled words as well as lists from spelling bees.

In general, small school spelling programs use little teacher time and allow students to proceed at their own rate, not limiting them to words on their grade level.

SCIENCE

Considering the suggestions for teaching skill subjects above, the faculty determines at the school level whether the content of science can be alternated. Ordinarily scheduling in multi-grade rooms will require alternating content areas for either science or social studies — or for both subjects.

The practicality and soundness of the decision to alternate content of a specific subject such as science will depend on the following:

- the teachers' clarity about important knowledge, skills, and attitudes at each level;
- the availability of learning materials
  with appropriate reading level for print materials,
  with audio-visual learning options,
  with lists of required vocabulary and skills for each unit,
  with glossaries and indexes for student use.

Teachers who decide to alternate science in multi-grade classrooms would stipulate a standard system, such as (for double-grade classrooms) the even-graded book for even years, the odd-numbered book for odd-numbered years.

Another decision for all involved faculty members is whether a standard science series or some other method will be used; e.g., using some guide (such as Votaw, 1986), teachers could develop teaching modules from free and inexpensive sources. Small schools which are often located in towns and rural areas literally can find many science materials in their back yards.

Some teachers with Grades 7 and 8 say that they can easily alternate two upper grade texts, for example, on life science and earth science; the reading level is about the same. Others with Grades 6-8 find that the last three books of some science series can be rotated in a three-year pattern.

A one-room-school teacher attests that all youngsters can study a similar science topic (e.g., magnetism) at the same time, but use different experiments. This teacher uses a three-year cycle of science topics, with study and experimentation at appropriate level:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sept.	Water	Health, safety, anatomy	Scientific method
Oct.	Plants	Earth science-fossils, quakes, coal, rocks, minerals	Forces-gravity, friction, inertia, molecular force, surface tension
Nov.	Land-plains, plateaus, mountains,etc.	Chemical change, atoms, molecules	Forces, energy, motion, weather
Dec.	Magnets	Magnetism	Sound
Jan.	Air & space	Solar system	Light —bending & reflecting sunlight, color
Feb.	Electricity & energy	Earth-mapping, motion, seasons	Acids, bases, salts
March	Animals	Animals	Chemical advanced
April	Anatomy	Plants	Plants
May	Food, nutrition	Food, nutrition	Animals

SOCIAL STUDIES

With multi-grade classrooms, the faculty may also consider the feasibility of alternating social studies instruction. As with science, the decision will depend upon the teachers' grasp of key concepts and skills for each level as well as the availability of learning materials with appropriate reading levels and audio-visual approaches.

Many two-grade classrooms alternate textbooks between Grades 5 and 6 as well as between Grades 7 and 8. Often students work in cross-graded pairs (e.g., one fifth grader with one sixth grader) to assure that youngsters can easily get help regarding any needed vocabulary or skills.

It is important — if both science and social studies textbooks are alternated — that opposite patterns be used to balance the easier and more difficult materials; namely, matching numbers (even books for even years) in science, non-matching numbers (even books for odd years) in social studies:

	Even year	Odd year	Even year	Odd year
Science, Gr. 5-6	Book 6	Book 5	Book 6	Book 5
Soc. Stud., Gr. 5-6	Book 5	Book 6	Book 5	Book 6

A three-year cycle can also be designed for social studies; e.g.,

Year 1: World History
Year 2: American History — emphasis on regions' historical and cultural development
Year 3: American History — emphasis on geography and states

ART, MUSIC, PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Youngsters with abilities in these areas deserve opportunities at least to discover and begin to develop their gifts. Yet the school often faces the argument that the few resources should be used on only the "important" subjects.

One response is to integrate parts of these areas with the other subjects or with valued community celebrations, e.g.,

- physical education with science,
- music with weekly liturgical singing practice,
- art with preparation for dramatic presentations.

To offer developmental learning experiences, the faculty must know well the learning objectives for art, music, and physical education at primary, intermediate, and junior high levels and plan opportunities to address needed objectives.

These areas — art, music, and physical education — often require only teacher materials, not student textbooks. A decision will be needed whether to use a student textbook series, a teacher guide, or another plan. The ERIC Clearinghouse for Small Schools has identified specific teacher guidebooks for art (Bertani, 1986) and for music (Rayner, 1984) — both designed for use in small schools in Australia.

Within the very small school, three or even four grades can be combined for these subjects; e.g., music for Grades 6-8; physical education for girls in Grades 5-8. In fact, the greater number of voices or players can be a positive asset to music or physical education.

At times — given the basic attitude of caring for one another in small community settings — it is advantageous to mix the older students with the younger children for these subjects, for example when learning to use paints or when learning two-part singing.

Once the basic materials and groupings are decided, the next issue is personnel. The small school — which rarely has staff specialists in these areas — needs someone to address these too-often neglected areas. The best prospect is a teacher who feels comfortable in the specific area. Other possibilities are parents or other volunteers who —with some native ability and a clear plan — can effectively handle one of these areas. Often a town coach appreciates the opportunity to develop students' basic skills in physical education class, and frequently someone who appreciates art is delighted to share simple art elements with the young. In any case where personnel are not certified, they would be oriented to the school and properly supervised.

Even if formal music classes are not valued by the school community, children need some opportunities to sing and, if possible, to play an instrument — even an inexpensive recorder. Once developed, these skills will have many outlets because music is often the basis of celebrations in rural areas. If no staff member feels capable, several approaches are available:

- using video programs for basic presentations — either via cable or tape;
- asking the parish organist to teach the children music, at least liturgical music;
- utilizing other community volunteers.

For physical education, besides the ideas mentioned above, some schools have found these ideas practical:

- focusing on the President's Physical Fitness Program or the Chrysler Physical Fitness Program; these programs can take place in available space; e.g., church hall, outdoors, or at times a classroom;
- having physical education on shared time with the public school (where allowed by law);
- providing physical education outdoors for the whole school during the last 15 minutes of each day — with very active basic experiences like running, skipping, hopping, or jumping rope.

OTHER

Although the standard curriculum may be limited, a regular series of mini-courses can broaden student interests and suggest individual learning goals. These brief instructional opportunities (e.g., one hour every Friday afternoon) can be offered by volunteers in areas such as cake decorating, wood carving, aerobics, stitchery, baking, recorder lessons.

The school community may wish to discuss the possibility of offering such mini-courses during the school day. If not or in addition, community representatives can determine whether after-school groups (e.g., drama club, choir, Spanish club) would be a practical means to further enrichment.

D. Supportive technology

One of the potential disadvantages of the small school is its smaller budget and therefore less variety in books, materials, and equipment. If that was true in the past with print material, it is especially apt to be true with today's costly educational technology.

If, however, even a small amount of these items can be secured for the small school, they can be much more available to the students than in the larger school. In fact — in the smaller school where teachers' time is in demand for multi-grade classes — the students often learn how to operate and handle most of the audio-visual equipment and computers.

Some of the consolidation proponents of the 1950's and 1960's said that the small school could not offer specialized or advanced classes. Now the same courses in high quality presentations are available to both large and small schools via computer, cable, and videotape.

According to one expert (Barker, 1986b), the most viable alternatives to broaden curricular offerings are the new technologies. Because of the array of these new opportunities, it is important that small schools identify the delivery systems most appropriate to their context. Most can adapt at least some of the technologically based alternatives with the result of specialized and diverse learning opportunities which are impossible with a small staff.

More detail is available about technological tools for rural education (Hofmeister, 1984; Barker, 1986c). This section merely presents a simple overview of what is available so that school communities can consider any useful and possible options:

1. Computer-Managed Instruction (CMI)

Computer-Managed Instruction provides a computerized program for testing, diagnosis, learning prescriptions, and record keeping — usually based on objectives within a basic skills curriculum.

CMI programming could test all students, prescribe learning experiences, and keep their achievement records; e.g., a CMI total school mathematics program could suggest the best small groups across grades, name the skills needed by each student, then keep their post-test scores. This program can help organize groups within the small school without adding tasks for the teachers with multi-grade responsibilities.

2. Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI)

Computer-Assisted Instruction is a followup to teaching machines, programmed learning, and reams of worksheets.

CAI can provide help to students — with immediate feedback — in specific areas within the regular curriculum. Because the teacher-directed drill must be minimized in the multi-grade room, CAI can give needed practice in basic learning areas, e.g., with vocabulary within the reading curriculum or with mathematics facts.

A word of caution with CAI materials: the school should check that products

- have been classroom tested,
- are part of a program which is broad enough to meet school needs,
- use the medium appropriately and do not merely transfer print lessons to a computer screen.

3. Videotex

Videotex is a system that makes computer-stored information available via computer screens or a printing terminal.

Videotex can be

- non-interactive (e.g., lets a user search through large amounts of information) or
- interactive (e.g., lets individuals add information to and retrieve information from the system).

Videotex can broaden the contacts of both students and teachers in small schools. By linking computers via modems, students may dialogue with teachers across the miles, students working on similar projects can exchange their findings, educators can shape an agenda for a coming meeting, consultants can respond immediately — even with extensive printed resources.

Today many plans exist to develop or expand state education technology systems. If the local video system is open beyond the public schools, it is important to check whether the system would give access to useful information. Currently the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) is investigating a national Catholic educational technology system.

4. Instructional Television

Instructional Television offers formal courses of study which may be either "canned" on videotape or "live" via cable, satellite, etc.

"Live" courses open possibilities to two-way interaction — audio by phone, print by computer, or audio-visual by teleconference. This opportunity goes a long way beyond the old correspondence course and offers many learning opportunities to teachers as well as students who have a limited number of opportunities in a smaller setting.

Some small rural high schools offer specialized courses through the use of a satellite network (Gudat, 1988). The same route can offer foreign languages or fine arts courses to elementary students when no specialist can be hired.

5. Videodisc

Videodisc systems can present video and respond like a computer.

The videodisc can allow the simulation of a science lab or vocational shop experience. Still in the development stage, this technology is quite expensive. Currently videodisc-based inservice training is used by hundreds of hospitals and by the U. S. Army. The videodisc may have an extensive future in education if its cost moderates —especially because of its potential to simulate lab experiences in the small school that lacks lab facilities.

When considering the use of educational technology, several warnings are appropriate. Schools should

- determine the best balance between electronic and personal contact for the student;

- base all selection on the needs of the students rather than solely on the availability of technology;

- consider the purchase of at least one computer with word processing software which can also be used for administrative matters. Even in the small school that lacks a secretary, this software can facilitate professional-looking letters and newsletters in a fraction of the time required by typewriter and can also be used for some student computer education.

- include not only initial cost but also maintenance and supplies when estimating costs.

- use joint planning, regular communication, involvement in selection, and teacher training.

- consider the possibility of forming or joining a computer consortium to share the costs of getting needed expertise and training concerning computers (described in Phillips, Nachtigal, & Hobbs, 1986).

E. Community Climate for Learning

According to representatives of the schools involved in the Small Schools Study, many parents favor smaller schools because of their supportive atmosphere and their closer connections with the parish and civic community. Although this atmosphere may be more likely in a smaller school, the reality of a positive community climate does not occur automatically.

Because rural areas rarely host institutions of higher learning and offer limited opportunities for academic education, the schools in these areas often need to create a climate appreciative of academic areas and conducive to learning. Just as positive community climate does not occur automatically, neither does a learning climate just happen.

Both areas need conscious steps; fortunately the steps overlap to the point that they can be considered and taken together. A practical goal for the small school is to establish a supportive climate that is conducive to learning. Toward this end, the principal and staff are key.

1. Total School Gatherings

The fact that it is easy to gather as a total school can help to build a community climate. The staff can consider various options; e.g., beginning each day with an upbeat morning assembly — an appropriate prayer, announcements of birthdays and other special events, a brief word about the saint of the day, a hymn or song with a positive message. Again, at the end of the day, a brief reflection and celebration of the day or a student-composed prayer related to the day's activities can send the youngsters off with a sense of strong support.

To underline the importance of learning, the faculty can also use these gatherings as opportunities to announce winners of essay contests, to support school representatives going to regional spelling bees, to display the neatest primary printing, to listen to a minute of a student's speech, to applaud students who constructed a model of the planets, etc. Not only staff but students can be alert for learners who can be recognized at these gatherings. Five minutes a day in such school gatherings is practical in a small school where such a gathering takes only a moment.

To promote the sense of togetherness in the students' families, a school may decide on a total-school homework policy that encourages family time, e.g., homework on Monday through Thursday only. Without adding unnecessary burdens, such school-wide practices and policies can build a unified spirit.

2. Faculty Teamwork

One of the potential disadvantages of the small school is the smaller number of teachers with, as a result, opportunities for fewer specialists. Yet this smaller number also holds the potential to form a closeknit, effective working group. Individuals not only know each other as persons, but also interact regularly with each other.

One supportive element is the team concept of administration noted earlier. By sharing some of the day-to-day administrative tasks, the teachers are regularly reminded that they are vital to the operation of the school.

Although the teachers may be few, the chance that their abilities will be well utilized is great. The principal not only knows each of the teachers better and can assign each very effectively; but often the teachers themselves can help plan their own schedules to match their expertise with school needs. In the small school, few teacher gifts remain unnoticed and underutilized.

In larger schools, needs are often unfilled because no one is aware of them. In the small setting, needs are more apt to be known. To maximize the limited resources, however, the cooperation and flexibility of all involved are needed. How can teachers be motivated toward that needed cooperation and flexibility? By their own participation and involvement.

Faculty members are more likely to work toward curriculum goals if they are involved in setting curriculum priorities; e.g., a teacher with a math/science specialization is more apt to prepare to teach reading effectively if that teacher has viewed a chart showing the diverse reading levels of the students and has been personally involved in a discussion of the advantages of a school-wide non-graded reading program as well as in the decision that every teacher will teach reading at the same time to provide these advantages to students.

In the same manner, teachers are more apt to utilize time well if they participate in the scheduling process; e.g., a teacher who would ordinarily prefer to meet kindergartners in five half-day sessions weekly — after learning about the transportation limitations in the rural area and participating in a decision to schedule kindergarten for three full days — will tend to plan and utilize better the time available. In one such situation, the teacher also noted other area preschool needs and, with enthusiastic community support, established preschool classes on the other two days.

In one more example, teachers generally will work effectively with combined grades if they are consulted about which grades can work best together. In one of the small schools studied, Grades 1 and 2 were sufficiently small to combine the grades in one classroom. Yet the faculty agreed on the need to teach Grade 1 students separately for half of every day so they would get a sound beginning in skill subjects and so that Grade 2's Religion class could focus on Sacramental preparation. A non-standard solution — of combining Grade 2 with Grade 4 for half of every day — resulted and effectively met both student and faculty needs.

The small number of staff members can easily be involved with the principal in the budgeting and selection of instructional materials. The participants in the Small Schools Study have found this inclusion of every teacher a step toward excellent utilization of those materials.

Although the above examples have focused on teacher cooperation and flexibility, the same spirit can work both ways: the school can ask, for example, that teachers extend their preparation to meet school needs; on the other hand, when teachers have needs, such as an occasional adjustment of their work hours, they should be able to request that the same level of flexibility be applied.

3. Involving the Students

Participants in the Small Schools Study repeatedly emphasized that the best way to help the students feel part of the community is to involve them in important responsibilities at school. Not only do the students feel part of the school community, but they develop their self-concept, their inter-personal relational skills, and their sense of themselves as learners and teachers.

Several parts of this publication suggest other ways in which students can be genuine participants in their own learning process. Only a few are listed here as examples:

- The students can do many tasks often relegated to staff members; e.g., raising the flag, getting the mail, feeding pets, caring for flowers or bushes, etc.

- The students can operate their own library system: e.g., in one school a card pocket with each student's name is affixed to the bulletin board by the door; to check out a book, a student signs the book card and puts it in his/her personal card pocket until the book is returned.

- Students can participate in a school-wide big brother/big sister program; e.g., Grade 7-8 students pair with Grade 1-2 children to introduce them to the school, help them participate in school liturgies or parties, take their hands on field trips, etc.

- Students can participate in multi-age groupings for school-wide responsibilities; e.g., a group of about four students (one each from Grades 1, 3, 5, 7) can work together to clear and clean the lunch tables, to dust shelves (high and low), to serve food, to collect tickets, to make wall murals etc.

- Older students can assume supervision of the school computers —preparing computers for use every day, helping to select programs to meet certain student needs, helping other students to run computers, duplicating work copies of programs, keeping the program disks in order, checking that they are all turned off at the end of the day.

- **During the last few minutes of the day, students can take out the trash and handle other simple cleaning and getting-in-order tasks.**

Each school will necessarily choose the specific tasks which suit their students and their setting. The general principle is that meaningful and useful student involvement in the operation of the school reflects the reality that students are an important part of the school community.

A community climate for learning can be enriched by reaching beyond the school. Ideas related to involving community members, collaborating with other agencies, marketing and public relations are included in Chapter V, Reaching Beyond the School.

F. Qualified Teachers

Although every school needs qualified teachers, the task of securing teachers for the small school increases in difficulty because of the requirement of teaching in multiple-grade settings and because of the remote location of many small schools.

In addition, Catholic schools need educators who value the faith dimension of education, including a sufficient number of teachers whose preparation and commitment enables them to teach religion. The small parish school is less likely to have either a full-time Director of Religious Education or a Director of Liturgy to help educate and assist new teachers.

In any school the individual teacher is important to instructional quality. In the small school, however, each teacher comprises a major part of the staff. That makes even more important the strategies suggested in this section for the recruitment, selection, orientation, and inservice education for teachers in small schools.

1. Recruitment

Most small schools are in towns and rural areas. A distinct hazard is that many recruits will not be able to accept the geographic and/or cultural isolation normally experienced in rural areas. Wilson (1982) places rural/small school teachers into four categories:

- The Steady turn-ons —
  These enjoy the non-metropolitan environment and find the work rewarding — obviously the best prospects.

- The Turn-ons —
  These enjoy the work but eventually move on because of dissatisfaction with available interpersonal relations, growth possibilities, etc.

- The Turn-overs —
  These took the position because nothing else was available and will remain only until a more desirable position is available.

- The Turn-offs —
  These are displeased with everything about the school, but they remain for some external reason such as fishing, hunting, spouse's position, etc.

Obviously some special recruiting considerations are needed for such situations. Recruiting for any school includes the ordinary steps of analyzing diocesan/school needs, planning a calendar for recruitment, and preparing an informational package about the school and diocese for prospects. In addition, the following steps (which include some ideas compiled by Swift, 1984) are suggested for schools in remote areas:

a. *Seek a specific audience — rural and open to Catholic* education. The school or diocese may benefit from recruiting at colleges which draw students from rural areas; in general, those young people who come from nearby or similar rural areas are more likely to be satisfied than those students who are accustomed to urban living. Based on the same rationale, any nearby Catholic college should be contacted about graduates who would be interested in continuing within a Catholic setting.

b. *Emphasize the quality of rural life* and the availability of leisure-time activities near the school.

c. *Stress special features of the area* — geography, climate, historical sites, cuisine, and isolation.

d. *Recruit the teacher's family when possible,* arranging overnight or weekend visits to interest the family.

e. *Include the total staff and some community members* in recruitment efforts (in preparing packets, hosting overnight, organizing a potluck supper, giving a tour of the area, etc.)

f. *Suggest options for employment of teachers' spouses* within the community, if needed.

g. *Search for desired housing* with community help, if needed.

h. *Offer community assistance in the moving process*, if desired.

i. *Emphasize the inherent advantages of small schools*, but be honest about the other realities of small schools and rural communities. Some advantages which will interest many teachers follow:

opportunity for individualized instruction;
long-term satisfaction of watching students' progress;
opportunity to know students and their families;
teacher involvement in curriculum and administration;
close working of the community with the school;
school as center of many church and community activities;
lower cost of living.

j. *Consider long-range strategies,* perhaps including scholarships which include agreements that recipients teach in the school/diocese.

k. *Recruit potential teachers early* from among the school's own graduates or from among local people, including outstanding teacher prospects who lack the necessary coursework; assess the potential of those who are serving effectively as aides.

The use of some of these considerations can drastically reduce adjustment problems and teacher turnover.

Matthes and Carlson (1986) surveyed reasons why teachers in rural schools and in other schools accepted their present positions. The teachers in rural schools reported that these items were more important:

a. pace of living;
b. cost of living;
c. size of school;
d. support from parents and community;
e. pleasant climate (physical and social);
f. access to resources (curriculum guides, instructional space, equipment, films, books, etc.).

These points may be included with others listed above in recruitment advertisements and during visits.

2. Selection

Participants in the Small Schools Study agree with the literature which emphasizes the need to prepare teachers specifically for teaching in rural and small schools. One resource (Gardener & Edington, 1982) is an excellent source of varied university programs for teacher preparation. Recruiting from that type of teacher program, if accessible, would be ideal.

Often, however, prospective teachers will not be fully prepared. Some of the specific preparation can be treated in school or diocesan inservice sessions; the selection process should rely heavily on general qualities — which cannot be developed rapidly — such as the following:

a. *A broad range of knowledge and methodology* is needed to meet multi-grade and multi-subject teaching assignments within a small school. "Certified" does not necessarily mean "qualified." Four or five moderately developed areas will often be better than one in-depth major area and one minor.

b. *A broadly developed person* with varied experiences and interests ordinarily enjoys and contributes well within a multi-grade and multi-subject situation.

c. *The person's interest in teaching students* rather than subjects becomes more important the smaller the school and the closer the teacher-student interaction.

d. *Ability and experience in seeing interdisciplinary possibilities* will prove an asset in situations where many areas must be taught in the shortened time available in multi-grade classrooms.

e. *A faith commitment and an orientation to Christian values* is required of teachers in Catholic schools. Because Catholic schools in small towns and rural areas — often small schools — have an especially close relationship with the Catholic Christian community, these qualities become even more important.

f. *Willingness to work hard and to assume extra tasks* is a must for a teacher in a school with fewer staff members and multiple assignments.

g. *Organization is essential* for a teacher to prepare for and to direct a multi-grade classroom; yet within the small setting it is also important to be comfortable with informality and flexibility.

h. *Basically the person should like the rural, small town, or other area* in which the school is located.

i. *The teacher should have an awareness of the whole school* and the ability to handle delegated administrative work because of the teamwork needed in the small school.

j. *The teacher should be mature, able to reach decisions independently,* and willing to be responsible for every child in school because the principal is often busy in another classroom.

k. *The person's ability to "fit in" with the rest of the staff* is essential because of the small setting.

The above categories suggest some questions to add to the usual interview queries. Some others are these:

a. Why are you seeking a position in this school?
(Understand and accept value of the small school?)

b. How would you better prepare yourself to teach the students here?
(Open to suggestions, yet self-sufficient?)

c. If two students from another class were fighting outside your classroom, what would you do?
(Sense of responsibility?)

d. How much time are you willing and able to give to this position?
(Dedicated and free for a job with much preparation?)

e. What are your short-term and long-range career plans?
(Afford to work in this setting? willing to stay a while?)

f. How do you feel about the fact that teachers in some other schools will be earning more than you?
(Understand that his/her worth as a teacher is not equal to the amount paid?)

g. What would you do the first day of class if no textbooks were available?
(Creative? Able to invent curricular materials, use community resources?)

h. Could you give some examples of situations where you have worked extensively with other people?
(Flexible? Relate well with others? Able to work with and within the community?)

i. How would you motivate a student who sees no reason for going to school?
(Love of students? Attitude toward academics?)

j. What would you do with students who have little academic ability?
(Students expected to work and to succeed? Able to diagnose and to prescribe helps for students who have learning difficulties?)

k. What aspects of your own faith in God best prepare you to teach religion or to help students participate in sacramental celebrations?
(Able to teach religion and to plan liturgies?)

l. Would you describe your favorite classroom?
(Designed to help a wide range of students? to offer varied learning opportunities? Student oriented? Much activity? Interesting to students? Organized?)

m. What subject areas do you consider yourself competent to teach?
(Knowledgeable of many subject areas, especially if teaching the upper grades?)

3. Orientation

The majority of teacher education programs train teachers for metropolitan or suburban areas. At least a few programs, however, are designed for smaller settings.

According to Gardener and Edington (1982), the basic themes in these preservice programs are the following:

a. student teaching in similar areas;
b. awareness of the cultural, social, economic factors in rural areas;
c. knowledge of community needs;
d. augmentation by inservice programs.

If such programs are not available, a school can develop other ways to offer experience in similar areas, to raise awareness of community factors and needs, and to augment preparation with inservice programs. Some ideas follow.

A field-based practicum — teaching and living in a rural community —allows a student teacher a better perception of the demands and rewards of teaching in a rural area. One program of student teaching (Campbell, 1986) allows the students to live with a rural family during eight weeks of student teaching experience. About 20% of the supervision is shared by the local school district.

Even with an appropriate student-teaching experience, the school will need some local orientation. If the preparation was not appropriate, the teacher will probably need extensive orientation. Some ideas follow:

a. Orientation may be given totally by the principal or may be supplemented by pairing the new teacher with a mentor, chosen from the experienced faculty members.

b. If possible, the new teacher should meet regularly over the summer with the principal and/or mentor.

c. If other nearby small schools will have new teachers, the school leaders may wish to request diocesan inservice assistance on topics such as classroom management and teaching techniques for the multi-grade classroom.

d. Orientation should, of course, include the usual areas: philosophy, policies, regulations, procedures (in diocesan and school handbooks), school facilities, resources, staff, schedules, emergency procedures.

e. In addition, a drive through the community can include discussion of occupations within the community, area resources, special service people in the community, etc.

f. If the school year is still in process, the new teacher will benefit by observing at least one classroom that is multi-grade or similar to the new position.

g. Curricular orientation should emphasize the main concepts and skills within the basic scope and sequence for subject areas.

h. The principal or mentor should help the new teacher to set up a classroom schedule, organize the classroom, and plan lessons including student learning activities.

i. If the newcomer must teach a new area (e.g., Grade 5-6 mathematics), the best preparation may be to study — and perhaps teach — the prior levels (e.g., Grade 3-4 mathematics).

j. The principal and mentor should make available very practical programs about basic teaching approaches.

Ideally the orientation would continue through the school year:

a. Someone would meet the new teacher briefly every day.

b. If possible, the principal or mentor would drop into the classroom daily during the first week.

c. Frequent supervision would continue until the teacher is well established; if the principal should be teaching fulltime, hiring a substitute teacher occasionally will allow the principal and/or mentor time for this important supervision.

4. Inservice Education

One of the potential disadvantages of the smaller school is that fewer colleagues are available to share ideas. Surveys in Gardener and Edington (1982) have found that most rural school teachers (as high as 97%) felt inadequately prepared to teach in rural schools. Based on this information, it is evident that some special inservice will be essential. The following considerations are important when developing such inservice:

a. The inservice should assist with practical matters; e.g., how to better teach two grades in one classroom, methods of teaching specific subjects, how to use learning centers to reinforce basic skills, options for scheduling, how to use available educational technology, time management, student goalsetting, and simple forms of recordkeeping.

b. Because of limited presenters in the area, the faculty may consider using learning experiences other than meetings; e.g., reading or videotapes, with followup support from a regional group of principals or veteran teachers.

c. Scheduling a professional day to observe other teachers in similar situations can be helpful.

d. To provide time for extended inservice sessions, the school may wish to plan mini-courses given by community members or a special enrichment time supervised by volunteers (e.g., Friday afternoon once a month).

e. To reserve faculty meeting time for staff development, the faculty may wish to hold frequent, short business meetings (e.g., 15 minutes every Monday lunch).

f. The faculty may want to seek other alternatives to after-school business. After the non-stop cycle of the teachers' day — with a constant movement among multiple grades in the classroom — it may be wise to honor a "holy hour" of quiet after school, holding needed business till the following morning.

g. Teacher exhaustion is a real hazard, especially in the small school with multiple responsibilities. Some staff opportunities could be planned solely to enjoy and celebrate together.

h. The school may also wish to offer some opportunities that include spouses and families of faculty to raise the level of interest, involvement, and support from each faculty member's home.

i. Whenever possible, inservice opportunities should be within the geographic area. When teachers need university courses, the school can help those teachers locate non-traditional delivery systems to avoid extensive travel time. The following course formats (suggested in Swift, 1985) are possible and practical:

1) Telecommunications courses, preferably interactive, with occasional on-site visits;
2) Weekend courses;
3) Correspondence courses;
4) Short, intensive, one-week, after-school courses, on-site if possible;
5) Off-campus, rural teacher centers for preservice teachers which could also assist with inservice needs.

This chapter has treated many areas of school organization: school leadership, financial considerations, school curriculum, supportive technology, community climate for learning, and qualified teachers. The smaller school, when organized effectively and efficiently, has the potential to meet or even exceed the efficiency of the larger school.

The next chapter will focus on the classroom, addressing strategies by which a teacher can instruct students effectively within the small school.

Chapter IV.

Teaching the Students Effectively

A teacher in a small school that is organized to build upon its potential begins with many advantages. That teacher nevertheless has a series of additional tasks to achieve within the classroom. True, many of the responsibilities exist for a teacher in any school; however, the elements that apply especially to the teacher in the small school will be emphasized during the consideration of the following responsibilities:

A. Learning about the School

B. Assessing Needs of Old and New Students

C. Outlining the Year's Curriculum

D. Planning Groups and Individualization

E. Locating Related Resources

F. Outlining Expectations and Growth Plans

G. Assessing Volunteer Potential

H. Arranging the Classroom

I. Planning the Week

J. Setting the Day's Climate

K. Adapting the Standard Lesson Plan

L. Reassessing at Reporting Time

M. Meeting Parents and Community

N. Growing Professionally

A. Learning about the School

Because the teacher in the small school teaches a sizable percentage of the student body, it is important that the classroom efforts fit within any existing overall school plans. In addition, that teacher — who often has multiple preparations — should take advantage of any helps already available within the school.

For that reason, the teacher should first learn about school-wide plans and priorities, available equipment and learning resources, local policies and procedures. An early investment in this information can save many hours of ineffective work.

1. School-wide curricular plans and priorities

Listed here are the preliminary questions a teacher can ask to clarify the school-wide curricular plans. More detail regarding teaching each area will follow later in this chapter with "Outlining the Year's Curriculum."

a. *For Religion*
The teacher should learn any school-wide plan for teaching religion (especially if content is to be alternated in a multi-grade classroom), for preparing liturgies, and for other school prayer opportunities.

b. *For skill subjects*
Because of the increased possibility of non-grading in the small school, the teacher should learn the schoolwide plan for teaching the skill subjects of math, reading, phonics, language arts, and spelling. The plan may utilize a computer-managed system, a basic text series, or a written curriculum. The teacher should check whether students who master their own grade level's objectives are limited to enriching those

areas or whether they are allowed to move to the objectives of the next grade level.

c. *For science and social studies*
Knowledge of any school-wide plan for teaching science and social studies — especially if it involves any alternating of areas or topics —is essential. Special note should be made of any assigned textbook(s) or other material for multi-grade rooms.

d. *For music, art, and physical education*
For subjects such as music, art, and physical education, the teacher should ask about any basic curriculum guides, any assistance, and any special combination of students.

e. *For instructional priorities*
The teacher should learn whether any instructional priorities have been named in the school. In the small school, these priorities ordinarily help to prepare the students for extended individual work, e.g., extra attention to reading skills in primary, strong foundation for reference skills in the upper grades.

2. **Other schoolwide plans and procedures**

a. *To develop self-discipline and study skills*
Because students need to work without direct teacher guidance for extended periods in the multi-grade classroom, the teacher should learn about any schoolwide plan to help the students move toward self-discipline and toward growth in independent study skills.

b. *For programs*
In a small school, everyone tends to be involved in every project and program. If the students are expected to participate in schoolwide programs, the teacher ought to be aware of such events (e.g., Christmas program, Mission Day, Grandparents Day, Liturgies, Readathons, Spelling Bees). With this awareness, the teacher can plan to emphasize related concepts and skills in concert with preparation for the activities, e.g., speech activities while preparing for the Christmas play.

c. *For student evaluation and reporting*
The smaller the setting, the more likely will everyone in the community know precisely which students received which grades on their report cards. For that reason, the teacher should learn and be able to explain clearly all school policies and procedures related to student evaluation, grades, and the school's reporting system.

d. *For mini-courses*
The teacher should be aware of mini-course opportunities that are planned or possible on a schoolwide or classroom basis. This advance awareness will help the teacher to identify some areas which are related to the curriculum, of interest to the students, but ordinarily impossible to include in the tight schedule of the multi-grade classroom. These are possible topics for such mini-courses.

3. School equipment

a. *For individual/group audio-visual use*
The teacher should note whether headphones or listening centers are available with the school's audio-visual equipment and should learn how to check out and to operate that equipment. Such equipment, which allows individual and small group use in the classroom without disturbing others, is essential to vary the learning opportunities of students in multi-grade classrooms and to reach a broad range of ability levels.

b. *For computing*
If the school has even one computer, the teacher should check on its availability, e.g., whether its use is restricted to the library when a volunteer is present or whether it is available on wheels for transport to the classroom. The computer is another valuable tool to add variety and to meet students' instructional needs.

c. *For laminating*
The teacher may also wish to check on the availability of a laminating machine in the school or community; this will add longer life to the homemade materials developed by many teachers in non-standard (e.g., multi-grade) teaching situations.

4. Resources

a. *For locating materials*
In all likelihood, the school maintains files or lists of instructional materials (audio-visual, computer software, etc.) that are available at school or in regional resource centers. Access to this information will speed the double or triple lesson planning that is required of the teachers assigned to multi-grade classrooms.

b. *For computer software*
Although few small schools maintain extensive amounts of computer software, some have made or can make arrangements to share

computer software through a regional center, through membership in a computer consortium, etc. Some have identified persons in the community who are willing to share their time and expertise to develop needed basic programs and to teach students or others how to enter data into those programs. Early inquiry can clarify the possibilities of computerized practice, review, and testing.

c. *For sets of books*
The teacher should learn — before any immediate need — whether any sets of dictionaries, Bibles, or other resource materials are available for use.

d. *For community opportunities*
To fully utilize the existing community resources and opportunities available — and to avoid duplicating experiences for students in multi-grade classrooms, the teacher should ask whether any file or list of community resources might be available. A further question is whether any of the available opportunities have been traditionally reserved for specific grades.

5. **Policies and procedures**

Although policies and procedures are important for teachers in every school, those in the small school — because of its flexibility — tend to be non-standard and less likely to be anticipated. In many schools, for example, students are not allowed to handle audio-visual equipment; in many small schools — to facilitate multi-grade activity — students are not only allowed, but also encouraged and trained, to operate equipment.

The policies and procedures of primary importance for the new teacher include those regarding the following topics:

field trips,
homework,
use of the library (school, public, bookmobile),
use of general equipment and materials,
outdoor classes,
use of volunteers and outside presenters,
discipline in extraordinary cases,
emergencies (fire, tornado, earthquake, first aid),
freedom of student movement (within school and beyond),
aides, and
tutoring.

B. Assessing Needs of Old and New Students

1. Old students

As in any school, the teacher can acquire information for decisions about grouping and individualizing by studying standardized test results — both the class averages and the extremes of student achievement. Because a small number of students are involved, this study can suggest major adjustments in the curriculum such as the omission of certain skill areas, thus saving hours spent preparing to teach the standard curriculum.

2. New students

Students from other schools often experience difficulty when transferring into the small school; the Small Schools Study participants agreed that most students transferring from single-grade classrooms do not know how to proceed without extensive teacher assistance and supervision.

When new students enter the school, the teacher can assess the need for special steps such as the following:

a. To help kindergarten students and first graders feel welcome, a late-summer home visit may be a good introduction.

b. The teacher or principal, after studying the new student's testing record, arranges additional testing as needed to assure accurate placement.

c. Immediately after registration, the teacher appoints a student "buddy" to help the new student feel at home and develop the needed skills.

d. The teacher or "buddy" makes certain that the new student is introduced to the students and the total staff.

e. The teacher and "buddy" emphasize the importance of and teach practical steps toward effective study habits and self-discipline.

C. Outlining the Year's Curriculum

1. In Religion

The teacher, after learning the school plan, determines the following:

a. the key knowledge, attitudes, values, and experiences for the assigned students;

b. the peripheral areas that may be used individually for enrichment or may be omitted;

c. the best way to combine basic areas to allow cross-graded classes to the extent desirable;

d. how to emphasize sacramental preparation with one grade only, e.g., while the other grade has a unit in reading Bible stories or works on a special theme project;

e. any other responsibilities, e.g., liturgy planning.

2. In skill areas

Based on any schoolwide plans for skills areas (math, reading, phonics, language arts, spelling), the teacher determines the following for the levels within his/her responsibility:

- the key concepts and skills to be mastered in each area;
- any areas that can be taught to combined grades, e.g., in mathematics — statistics, division, problem solving — with differentiation in the level of problems;
- an approximate assignment of the areas to be taught to the time available, dividing the required material first by semester, then by quarter, next by month, finally by week; when possible, trying to plan natural conclusions at the end of grading periods;
- concepts and skills that can be omitted (because of alternation of textbooks, duplication within teaching materials, or total class mastery);
- concepts and skills that can be used as enrichment (because of their non-essential nature);

- any areas which are unfamiliar to the teacher; the teacher may benefit from reviewing related material in the preceding student text;

- any feasible year-long options to regular teacher presentation, e.g., all spelling words introduced on and practiced with audiotape or with a student "practice partner"; all spelling tests by parent volunteer at school or by parent at home;

- location or preparation of self-checking materials (print, audio, computer) for individual or small group practice exercises as well as unit self-tests.

3. **In science and social studies**

Within the school plan, the teacher identifies classroom curricular responsibilities and determines the following:

a. the key concepts and skills to be learned by all students within the classroom;

b. the best way to structure the following:

1) the teaching of those concepts and skills — as classroom, grades, groups, or individuals;
(Groups and individualization will be considered below in Section D, "Planning Groups and Individualization.")

2) the allocation of available time to those concepts and skills;

3) the best use of available materials.
This could mean, for example that the teacher decides to use the materials assigned by the school plan in one of the following ways:

a) to alternate the two assigned texts, using, for example, World Geography one year and American History the next;

b) to use only the higher text;

c) to alternate state and federal Constitutions when both are required;

d) to use sections from both available texts each year;

e) to focus on science in one semester and social studies in the other;

f) to use general ungraded material when possible to lessen the focus on the graded textbook (from the State Conservation Department, the American Dairy Council, American Cancer Society, etc.);

g) to build a science program on low-cost experiments with supplementary study from textbooks and other resources.

4. In music, art, physical education

Using the schoolwide plan or another basic guide, the teacher identifies the following:

a. the knowledge and skills appropriate to the assigned levels;

b. possible interdisciplinary approaches to lessons and student activities involving these areas;

c. the best timing for each area, especially when a gym is not available, e.g., whether to allot more time for physical education in the fall and spring with more time for fine arts in the winter;

d. whether to use any of the fitness plans available from various agencies and companies;

5. In general

After reviewing all areas of required learning, the teacher may wish to schedule simultaneously any studies that could be treated in an interdisciplinary manner:

a. combining two subjects when related, e.g., science and math for probability or graphing; Religion and social studies to link the geography of the Holy Land with Scripture; social studies and literature for a unit on black history, women's studies, an historical era, or a regional study;

b. using a common vehicle to teach all subjects for one week, e.g., the newspaper, reference books;

c. planning an interdisciplinary field trip, e.g., one trip during which the students can study varied trees, see the effects of a lake on its environment, use scale measures to show the relative distances between cities, draw landscape scenes, compare the rhythmic sounds of nature to music, etc.

D. Planning Groups and Individualization

After studying available records — standardized tests, any other diagnostic or readiness measures, annotated records about last year's groupings — and talking with veteran educators at the school, the teacher's tasks are these:

- to group the students who have similar skills and needs;
- to identify students who have unique needs —
    those with learning difficulties,
    those with above-average achievement;
- to design a plan to track each student's mastery.

1. In religion

Although religion ordinarily is taught to total classes of students, the teacher can be alert for any students who seem to lack background, understanding, or a positive attitude regarding the faith or its expressions. Such areas may be strengthened by arranging special reading, audio-visual programs, or brief conferences.

2. In skill subjects

In skill subjects — reading, mathematics, phonics, language arts, and spelling — a checklist of skills can serve as a basis for grouping as well as for record keeping. Such lists of skills are provided in standardized testing manuals, textbook manuals, and in specialized professional books.

Generally, the younger the student, the more care will be needed to assure a firm foundation in skill development. With that foundation, students can handle more self-instruction, with most youngsters becoming very independent. The teacher can then spend more time with those who need and want more assistance.

3. In science and social studies

With science and social studies, many children can discuss the same topics and issues, but then they need varied ways to learn about those areas — with different levels of expected learning outcomes. Especially when combining the younger students in Grades 3 and 4, modifications in expectations will be needed.

The publication, *Challenging Gifted Students in the Catholic School,* (Hall, 1985) suggests practical ways to vary assignments to meet differing needs within the same classroom by modifying the content, process, product, or learning environment. Two examples from the publication follow:

- Content Modification — Degree of abstractness
  The regular activity studies types of dinosaurs. Some students can also study the relationship between dinosaurs and their environment with possible reasons for their extinction.

- Process Modification — Questioning strategies
  The regular curriculum asks two questions, What are the parts of an insect? and What are some types of insects? Some students can also address other questions: How are the parts of an insect similar to the parts of other animals? to people? How are they different from other animals? from people? How does the environment influence the development of any species of animal?

4. **In music, art, and physical education**

Because music, art, and physical education are participatory classes, children's skills must be considered when planning the class. This is especially important when a two- or three-year age range is involved.

In music, some students may be "allowed" to play the xylophone, finger cymbals, or recorders for a while until they are able to match the tones vocally. With art, all students could use the same media (e.g., poster paint) — with different degrees of design detail (e.g., a basic seascape or a boat or a fisherman) suggested according to experience and ability; or all could work on the same designs (e.g., still life) — with different media (e.g., crayon or charcoal or water color) according to experience and coordination.

In physical education, for example, before playing basketball, it is essential to begin with small groups working on specific needed skills, e.g., passing, dribbling, shooting. These skill groups could be led by student leaders.

5. **Variety**

A Grade 5-6 classroom could have the following groupings:
three reading groups,
two math groups,

total classroom sessions for religion, science, social studies classes combined with Grades 7-8 for music, art, and physical education.

In this classroom, a Grade 5 student could be working with a variety of youngsters:

Grade 6 students for reading,
a group composed predominantly of Grade 5 students for math,
Grades 5 and 6 for religion, science, and social studies,
Grades 5-8 for music, art, and physical education.

6. Flexibility

Occasionally a time could be allowed for "catchup" or for any work "contracted" between student and teacher. Sometimes students who have completed their work may be allowed to audit an upper class.

After work required of groups or individuals is completed, enrichment materials which match the students' interests and abilities should be available. These need not be paper-and-pencil exercises, but may include reusable puzzles, special books, computer programs, audio- or video-cassettes. Every student should have a fair chance to enjoy occasional enrichment activities.

E. Locating Related Resources

1. Classroom file

Unless the school's resource file is extremely detailed, the teacher may wish to consider beginning some system (a card file, looseleaf notebook, a special page in each teacher manual) for matching available resources with each learning objective or with each unit. Doing this once for the year will ultimately save time and will avoid subsequent forgetting about helpful materials.

The resource file will be more useful if the material can be identified basically according to its main purpose, e.g.,

Intro = to introduce concept
Drill = for drill and practice
Enrich = for enriching and supplementing

As students use and respond to the materials, the teacher may wish to key the items to indicate successful usage levels, e.g.,

A = Useful for average
S = Special help for slower
G = Appropriate for academically gifted

2. Review of available resources

With scope-and-sequence charts or lists of key concepts and skills in hand, the teacher reviews whatever resources are listed in the school file or found on the storage shelves:

- audio-visual materials
  - 16mm. films
  - filmstrips
  - videotapes
  - audiotapes
  - records
- computer software
- self-correcting classroom kits
- flash cards
- games
- commercially prepared spirit masters
- idea/activity books
- Cuisenaire rods or other math manipulative materials
- other materials
- ideas for possible field trips
- other community resources.

3. Development of missing areas

Units with no matching materials will invite one of the following:

- the teacher may wish to create supportive material (with help from students or other volunteers);
- students may be invited to create helpful learning material after they have mastered a unit;
- the teacher may record these areas for future opportunities to order materials.

a. *Possible directions*
The following varied ideas suggest ways to adapt available equipment, to use ordinary materials, and to identify inexpensive publications.

Records and audiotapes are available in many areas from math facts to language arts and music. When headsets are available, they offer an attractive alternative to print materials, especially for young students. Even primary youngsters can operate their own listening centers to practice skills in phonics or comprehension or to enjoy reading little books with the tapes.

Music albums can support the study of music history with one week's focus, for example, on the history of rock. Some records can direct and motivate exercises and other physical educational activities for young children.

The multi-grade room can find an asset in available video programs, especially if the video player is equipped with headsets. Sometimes the needs of one grade or ability level can be met by using videotaped instruction. Professional video programming is available in a variety of areas and even offers basic courses, such as *3-2-1 Contact* for science. Video programs can assist with presentations on many topics, e.g., rocks and minerals, magnifying glasses, weather.

In many areas the cable TV contractor must provide cable access to schools, and many practical programs can be used live or may be recorded (by volunteers or students) for off-air use. Some parents may be willing to loan or contribute educational tapes for classroom use. As with films, video programs should have teacher followup as well as related reading and study.

If the school has no librarian, a typical situation with the small school, the teacher may wish to check commercial opportunities from the suppliers of reference books (with the approval of the principal); e.g., representatives of some encyclopedia companies will present units in library/research skills and check student work — with no requirement to buy their materials.

The new arrival can benefit from asking other teachers for recommendations based on what they have found useful in that particular school. If a local library or bookmobile is available, that may prove a source for books, magazines, cassettes, records, etc., to support units of study.

Other practical resource ideas can be found in books such as *Before School Starts* (Schell & Burden, 1984).

b. *Special resources*

Many resources for the teacher in the small or rural school are unknown because they are not advertised by a commercial publisher.

Many of these materials have been developed with public funds and therefore may be duplicated in the interest of education. Special resources include these:

- *A Program in Music for Small Schools* (Rayner, 1984), a weekly syllabus for Years One through Seven, was designed for teachers in small schools in Australia. This program uses the Kodaly singing-based approach to music skills. The learning occurs as students make music and have fun; it does not depend upon a knowledge of music theory, nor does it require instruments. Teaching plans for each unit include learning objectives in melody, rhythm, ear training, listening, part work, and form.

- *A Program in Art for Small Schools* (Bertani, 1986) was written for use in small schools in Australia where children of varying ages and abilities are under the guidance of one teacher. For each medium, progressions of five to seven lessons are suggested for lower, middle, and upper school children. Each lesson includes skills and knowledge to be developed, materials needed, and a brief description of student activities.

- *Community Resources for Rural Social Studies Teachers* (McCain & Nelson, 1981) suggests how to capitalize on the resources provided by the physical, historical, economic, political, and law-related elements within the rural setting.

Schools with available outdoor area — often the setting of small schools — have special learning opportunities. Teachers may want to consider getting the following resources or merely being creative in related areas:

- *Using the Outdoors to Teach Science* (Payne, 1985b) suggests activities such as "A School Yard Alphabet Hike," an exercise to observe things (A to Z) in the environment that appeal to different senses.

- *Using the Outdoors to Teach Social Studies* (Knapp, Swan, S. Vogl, & R. Vogl, 1986) includes ideas like "Exploring Old Farms," an activity which leads students to infer how people used the farms over the years.

- *Using the Outdoors to Teach Mathematics* (Payne, 1985a) describes activities such as "Locating the Center of an Acre" which can reinforce skills and develop students' sense of dimensions.

- *Outdoor Education Community Studies through Field Experiences* (Swan, 1979), although primarily for high school, can be adapted for use on the junior high level for student-conducted community studies, e.g., living history and occupational studies.

4. Variation

Variety in study materials is important to keep students interested during the added individual work time found within the multi-grade classroom. An assortment of ideas for varying the day follows:

If a tachistoscope is available, it can be used not only to promote good eye movement and faster reading, but also to speed recognition of number facts or other memory items. Carousels with homemade slides can be designed to direct practice in areas without commercially prepared resources. With some preparation, these machines can be student operated.

During the year, copies of student magazines can be kept for future use; e.g., the articles, short stories, and plays can be used to practice reading aloud. The students can practice in pairs or can record their reading on audiocassette with peer review, then improve and re-record the selection for teacher or parent critique.

Blank audiotapes can be used (by teacher, volunteers, or students) to record unfinished narratives, those which give the student the opportunity to finish a story — in writing or by dictating a conclusion on another tape.

The chalk board can serve as valuable learning equipment — provided some means of checking (by teacher, by an assigned student, or by an answer key) is arranged.

Overhead projectors can be used by small groups of students for practice; e.g., several students can practice forming different words by changing one letter at a time with a simple phonics wheel.

Much of the individual practice which students in multi-grade classrooms need can become more attractive by using the format of puzzles or playing cards, e.g., map-puzzles, animal cards, president cards. Some of these items may be contributed to the school after some use in the home.

Blank transparencies can provide reusable media for students to draw colored picture stories, with the prospect of projecting them for the total class at the end of the day.

Outdated Missalettes can be used to mark note values or other music terminology.

Recycled computer paper can be used for writing stories (and revising them after peer critique) or for drawing picture stories or murals for display around the room. Other recycled paper can serve to make booklets which summarize what has been learned in a unit.

Because students have additional study time, novels can be used to supplement lessons, e.g., *Johnny Tremain* with the American Revolution.

Occasionally students can combine needed practice with celebrations; e.g., primary students measure ingredients and follow directions to mix a cake during recess, a parent or older student bakes it, then the students divide and eat it at lunchtime.

Multi-grade classrooms, which offer much time for student thinking and writing, can effectively use a variety of computer programs, if available, from word processing with a spelling checker to creative thinking programs such as "Lemonade Stand."

Computers with printers are also very flexible, able to facilitate the peer review and revision process in language arts. With a program like "Printshop," students can design greeting cards for sick or celebrating parishioners, or they can complete banners for church as art projects. With software like "Newsroom" or "Appleworks," they can write stories and produce a school newspaper.

For the teacher with small classes or groups, the computer printer provides a convenient way to duplicate stories or student-generated unit questions without a copy machine.

Some games that do not directly relate to classroom work may be valuable for rainy day recesses, e.g.,

Sorry which can teach numbers and addition;
Yahtze which uses multiplication and division;
Scrabble to stretch vocabulary;
States and Traits game (some teachers challenge students to beat their score);
Trivial Pursuit (students can make their own questions and have a challenge match);
Limbo or another of the religious forms of *Trivial Pursuit*.

A search for all of the above items, in most situations, will generate some variety of resources related to the students' learning objectives. Obviously every student will not be expected to use the same resources or meet the same objectives; those decisions are considered next.

F. Outlining Related Expectations and Growth Plans

Before welcoming students to a multi-grade classroom where they will have less direct teaching and supervision, the teacher should have clear goals related to self-discipline and study habits with some plans to reach those goals.

1. Toward self-discipline

The first step is to learn and apply the schoolwide plan for discipline. As explained earlier, this plan — in the school with multi-grade classrooms — should give additional emphasis to self-discipline, study habits, Christian principles, and individual responsibility.

On the first day, the teacher will discuss some basic needs of such a learning situation and the reason for having classroom rules. The teacher will either elicit suggested rules from the students, making certain all basic needs are included, or will present some rules, inviting students to suggest additional rules. The rules would then be posted in language appropriate for the students; an upper grade list could appear as follows:

> Listen attentively.
> Respect own and others' rights to learn.
> Treat each other and all materials with concern.

From time to time, lessons may be needed on topics such as responsibility, respect, concern, justice, or patience. Some specific lessons to treat such topics at the primary, intermediate, and junior high levels are included in *Fostering Discipline and Discipleship* (National Catholic Educational Association, 1985). Most important is that the teacher find regular ways to support the students in a major goal of Christian education: to help those students move

> from externally imposed discipline
> toward self-discipline,
> toward the ultimate goal of
> personally accepting Jesus Christ and his principles.

2. Toward self-directed learning

The second step is to find any specific approaches to learning which are needed by the specific age and capability levels of the students in the classroom. Investing a few class hours to develop students' study habits — how to plan, to listen, to skim, to read, to take notes, to summarize, to evaluate critically — will be repaid well in time saved during the year.

The goal to self-directed learning moves in a pattern similar to growth in discipline: the students are helped to move

from passive learning
toward self-motivated learning,
toward the ultimate goal of
independently reaching higher learning levels.

To encourage learning, to model a concern for justice, and to prepare for the local network which often compares all statements from school, the teacher will also want to give advance thought to expectations for grades. After studying any related local policies, a teacher would develop and present to the students — preferably on the first day of school — a clear explanation of classroom policies and procedures. This would include, for example:

the proportion each element (tests, participation, homework, classroom work) will be considered in determining a quarter grade;

the extent to which a subject grade will include related applications of that subject, e.g., whether evaluation in spelling will include only unit words or also spelling in other curricular areas;

the extent to which students' use of their abilities and effort will affect a grade.

3. Including the student

More teachers are beginning to discuss realistic goals and expectations with individual students during simple, brief teacher/student conferences. They also invite the students to assess their own learning prior to receiving their report cards and to set goals for the next period. A school which — because of the multi-grade setting — must place additional responsibility on students should consider including them in student/parent/teacher conferences to reflect their important involvement in their own learning process.

Although the inclusion of students within the traditional parent/teacher conference is ordinarily initiated at the school-wide level, teachers can find many other ways to help students gradually assume more responsibility for their own learning. The multi-grade classroom offers many opportunities to encourage this growth.

The best routes toward the goals of both discipline and learning rely on well planned lessons which meet the students' readiness levels and allow varied approaches and materials for student learning. Related considerations were discussed in the prior section, "Planning for Groups and Individualization."

G. Assessing Volunteer Potential

1. Daily assistance

The multi-grade classroom will have a greater-than-average number of student levels and materials — as well as an added claim on the teacher's time. If possible, the teacher should try to forecast situations in which room mothers or other volunteers will be needed or very helpful. These situations could include the following:

preparing materials,
assisting small groups and individuals,
checking student work upon completion,
collecting money or coordinating sales, etc.

2. Substitution

In rural areas, certified substitutes are often difficult to find. On occasion, they may have to be replaced by room mothers. For that exigency, a special day of substitute lessons could be prepared and kept in the teacher's desk. Rather than continuing the current work, these lessons would focus on interesting, important, but independent areas such as building general vocabulary, working with assorted math comprehension problems, practice with liquid and dry measures, studying the capitals of the fifty states, etc. When outlining the year's materials, the teacher may wish to identify areas of learning that can be reserved for such situations.

3. Student help

At times, volunteers will not be available; in some classrooms they may not be needed. Students can learn how to assist the teacher and to even assume some tasks which are limited to the teacher or an aide in larger settings. Entrusting students with such responsibilities can give a sense of ownership. Every classroom has opportunities for student responsibilities such as these:

care of equipment for playground and physical education;
feeding classroom animals or fish;
watering plants;
cleanup — dusting, emptying pencil sharpener and waste can;
checking classroom lights;
serving as line leaders;
distributing papers;
collecting assignments;
tending to windows and blinds;
taking and reporting the lunch/milk count.

In the multi-grade classroom with more student work time, student service may expand to areas such as the following:

responsibility for answer keys and/or correction of work;
operation of audio-visual equipment for class or small groups;
make-up work with absentees;
introduction of new learning materials to younger students;
trouble shooting when students have computer problems
skill practice with peers;
scheduling of fair turns with playground equipment.

H. Arranging the Classroom

The classroom arrangement in the small school deserves special attention for many reasons:

1. The room has multiple grades, groups, levels of students who need work space.

As a result, the effective desk or table/chair arrangement will form several small groupings around the room; when possible, a table or counter for materials will be a welcome addition in each group area.

2. The varied levels require the distribution of multiple tasks.

To facilitate this giving of multiple tasks, the room will need an assignment board, pockets, etc. identified for groups and individuals to help students stay on task with little direct teacher guidance. Needed papers may be included with the assignment system or distributed through a series of "out" boxes (or trays, folders, or large envelopes) —marked either by task, group, or individual.

3. **Students — with less opportunity for frequent teacher encouragement — will need some motivation to continue working responsibly.**

Some students will be motivated by a displayed system of checking off completed tasks — especially tasks which do not produce paper results. To emphasize certain aspects of student responsibility, other charts could credit students for working independently when appropriate, effective tutoring, neatness, promptness, assistance with classroom care, etc.

4. **Tutors and tutees, paired learners, and some small groups will need spaces where quiet talking will not disturb others.**

Areas near walls or behind low dividers may be designated for these pairs or small groups of learners.

5. **The teacher — although instructing one group — must be able to supervise all students.**

An effective teacher's position while instructing a part of the class is immediately before the group involved, yet facing the total classroom. This position allows the teacher to focus on the group as well as to observe all areas of the room. Occasionally the teacher can walk around to peruse all student work while still maintaining contact with the focal group.

Although the teacher ordinarily has a standard teacher desk in the classroom, it is used mainly when working before/after school or occasionally when conferring with individual students or very small groups. Ordinarily the teacher would instruct from a portable base in front of each group — with movement as needed to keep personal contact where needed; some teachers like to use a stool (higher than a chair to assure good vision of the total room, with a back for support) and a small table on wheels for needed manuals and materials. Students can easily move this base from group to group.

A teaching center is also needed for times when the total group is working together. To create a sense of the whole, student desks can be moved, or students can move to extra desks which — if available — are kept behind the larger student group.

6. **Because the students work for extended periods before again meeting the teacher, they need regular and rapid feedback to assure they are using correct procedures.**

To allow rapid response concerning their practice, some area should be provided for correction of daily work. This could be a centrally located table with answer keys. An important preliminary understanding is that learning — sometimes through mistakes — is the most important product.

7. **Students who work on several tasks between direct instruction periods need a sense of completion between tasks. Moreover, teachers need some way to organize a variety of completed papers.**

Some collection site — with baskets, boxes, or folders — will be needed for students to place their completed (and ordinarily self-corrected) work. A system which subdivides the work by subject, group, or by student provides the teacher a quick check of the day's work.

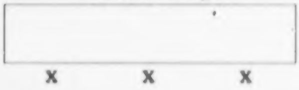
8. **Students who are working on their own much of the day need settings that are work-oriented, but varied and comfortable.**

Generally a teacher is advised to begin the year with the standard classroom furniture that is available, such as desks, study carrels, tables and chairs. After the teacher feels certain of order in the room, a greater variety of student seating (e.g., cushions) and work areas (e.g., individual chalkboard practice space, individual reading houses) may be added. Generally, it is better to begin the year with a simple classroom, then to introduce learning centers and other materials gradually, as they clearly relate to the curriculum. Too much at once can give a sense of confusion and clutter.

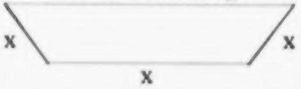
Opportunities to stand for brief work sessions (e.g., while correcting work at the answer key station) can add to student comfort. Whenever possible, the teacher will offer alternatives to reading and writing, e.g., use of self-checking flash cards, learning through audio or video cassettes, etc. Shelves or a cabinet — organized and labeled — can facilitate easy access and return of these materials.

To avoid distraction, care would be taken that the video screen faces only the students currently learning from it. For the same reason, the teacher would arrange that any computer monitor faces only the individual student or pair of students who are currently working at it. For this purpose, the placement of any screened equipment on trapezoid- or hexagon-shaped tables — or using only one monitor per side of a rectangular table — is superior to arranging several screens in a row.

Distracting:



Less distracting:



9. A variety of material will be needed for the many levels within the room; yet available classroom space must be reserved for materials in current use.

Various levels of teaching and learning materials need to be well organized — using labeled file folders or large envelopes — and stored where the material will not clutter the classroom or use space that is needed for material in current use.

10. Sometimes students need to use a number of related materials or resources when working on one project or learning area.

Sometimes student work can be facilitated and clearly directed by using learning centers or workshop areas. Learning centers may gather for student use any of the following:

- all the resources related to one unit;
- all the materials needed by one group;
- all the materials which require the same type of work atmosphere, equipment, etc.;
- all enrichment material.

The center or work area can be based on a table; within a study carrel, or at a special desk. All needed resources and directives would be there. Because the number of simultaneous users will be limited, the teacher arranges a sign-up or scheduling process.

According to a study of the one-room school, (Berg, 1977), the efficient classroom

a. reflects instructional priorities;
b. is a center of learning activities;
c. is supported by a storage area;
d. uses learning centers to organize classroom resources;
and
e. is in a state of flux.

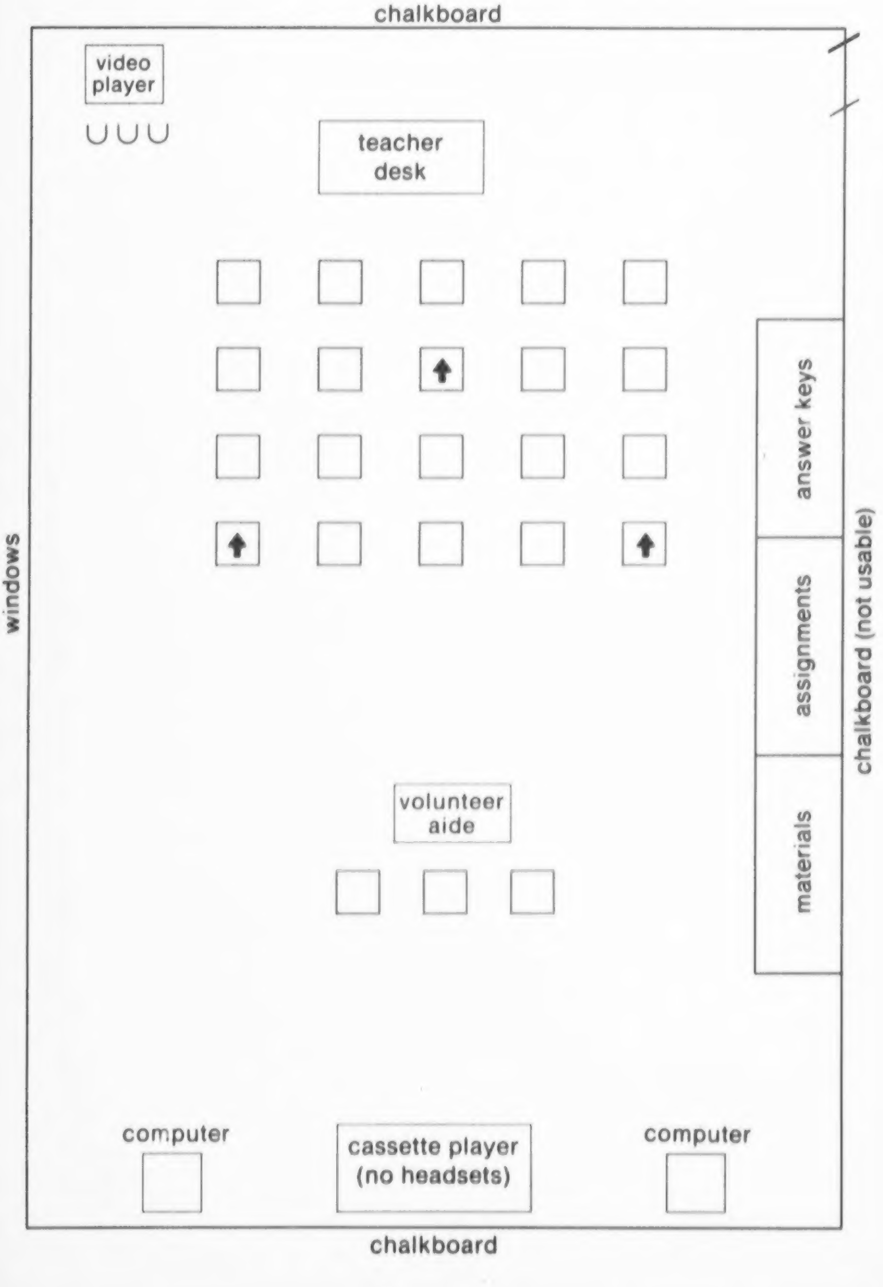
In summary, the classroom should reflect the kind of learning that is occurring and the varied student groupings — the total class, small groups, pairs, individual students. All areas can be so arranged that movement between work places does not disturb the group working with the teacher or — as much as possible — other students.

The teacher is urged to study the sample diagrams on the following pages — comparing the inefficient design with the more efficient design. Then, recalling the needs and suggestions listed above, the teacher may wish to sketch several possible designs that would support the learning and groupings of a newly assigned classroom.

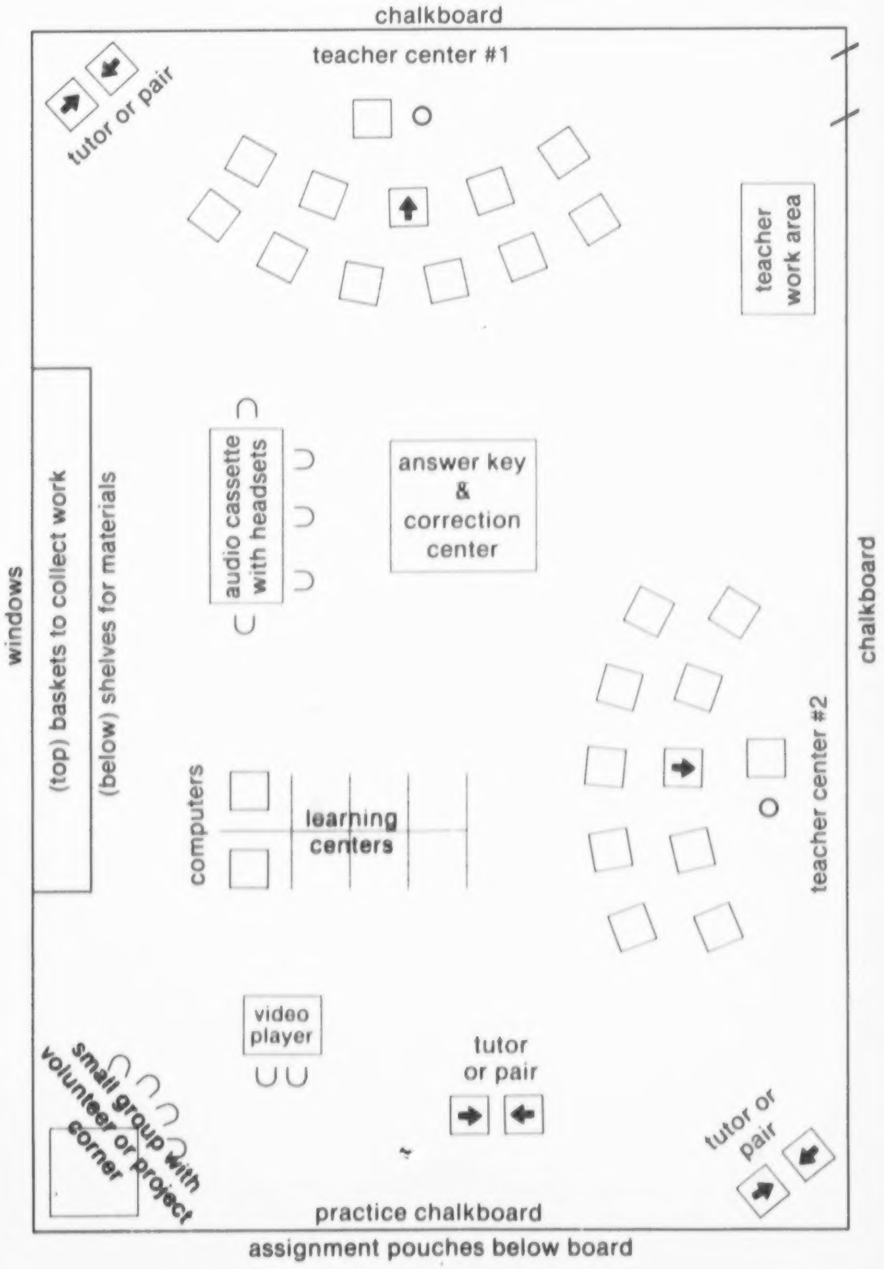
To redesign an existing classroom, a teacher might follow the steps suggested by Berg (1977):

a. Draw a diagram of the present classroom arrangement.
b. Mark with red x's any materials not actively used. Mark with blue x's any materials blocking a chalkboard or other learning options.
c. List specific learning activities to take place.
d. Make a new diagram to facilitate these activities.
e. Rearrange the room and store unused material.

Sample diagram of *inefficient* classroom:


chalkboard
video player
teacher desk
answer keys
assignments
materials
windows
chalkboard (not usable)
volunteer aide
computer
cassette player (no headsets)
computer
chalkboard

Sample diagram of *redesigned* classroom:


chalkboard
teacher center #1
tutor or pair
teacher work area
windows
(top) baskets to collect work
(below) shelves for materials
audio cassette with headsets
answer key & correction center
chalkboard
computers
learning centers
teacher center #2
video player
tutor or pair
small group with volunteer or project corner
tutor or pair
practice chalkboard
assignment pouches below board

I. Planning the Week

Planning a week in a multi-grade classroom requires care in scheduling as well as awareness of learning objectives, methods of instruction, assignments, and varied learning opportunities. Once the weekly schedule is tried and adjusted, it can continue to be used as long as needs remain the same.

1. Weekly Scheduling

With diocesan and applicable state time requirements for subject areas in one hand and any schoolwide or inter-classroom scheduling in the other, the teacher of the multi-grade classroom is ready to set up two schedules:

a. one to indicate how the students will meet the required time for each subject area;

b. the other to guide the teacher's direct instructional time.

In a Grade 5-6 classroom, for example, the fifth grade students would meet their required time as follows:

Grade 5 Students

	Monday-Wednesday		Thursday-Friday
8:00- 9:00	En, Handwrtg, Sp	8:00- 8:40	Mass
9:00-10:00	Reading	8:40-10:00	Reading
10:00-10:15	Recess	10:00-10:15	Recess
10:15-10:50	Reading	10:15-11:15	En, Handwrtg, Sp
10:50-11:45	Math	11:15-11:45	Science
11:50-12:35	Lunch	11:50-12:35	Lunch
12:40- 1:20	Social Studies	12:40- 1:10	Religion
1:20- 2:00	Religion	1:10- 2:10	Math
2:00- 2:35	Science	2:10- 2:40	Social Studies
2:35- 3:15	Art, Music	2:40- 3:15	Phys Ed

The teacher in that Grade 5-6 classroom would have a more detailed schedule. A schedule for Monday could resemble the following example:

Teacher — Grades 5-6

	Monday
8:00- 8:05	Demonstrate 5-6 handwriting focus for week
8:05- 8:23	Present 5 English; assign practice
8:23- 8:40	Present 6 English; assign practice
8:40- 8:48	Check 5 English practice, give assignment
8:48- 8:55	Check 6 English practice, give assignment
	(Combine 5-6 English when on same topic.)
8:55- 9:00	Check students beginning new taped Sp units
9:00- 9:05	Check Reading work Groups E, A, and D
9:05- 9:20	Present Reading Group R
9:20- 9:25	Assist Reading Group R, A, and D
9:25- 9:40	Present Reading Group E
9:40- 9:45	Assist Reading Group R, E, and D
9:45-10:00	Present Reading Group A
10:00-10:15	Recess
10:15-10:30	Assist Reading Group R, E, and A
10:30-10:45	Present Reading Group D
10:45-10:50	Check on all Reading work
10:50-11:05	Present 6 Mathematics; assign practice
11:05-11:20	Present 5 Mathematics; assign practice
11:20-11:30	Check on 6 Mathematics; give assignment
11:30-11:40	Check on 5 Mathematics; give assignment
11:40-11:45	Check on clarity of assignment 5-6 Math
11:50-12:35	Lunch
12:40- 1:20	Social Studies 5-6 combined
1:20- 2:00	Religion 5-6 combined
2:00- 2:35	Science 5-6 combined
2:35- 3:15	Music 5-8 combined

As evidenced in the teacher schedule above, when allotting an hour for two grades' study in a subject, the teacher does not spend thirty minutes with one grade, then thirty with the other. Ordinarily the teacher will spend a short segment of time with one group, move to another, check on the first, give a few moments to an individual or two who need help, etc., keeping the overall time allotment fair.

The analogy of a juggler keeping many balls in the air is an accurate one. With experience, the teacher will acquire a rhythm of movement among groups.

2. Objectives

As students learn how to help themselves and others, the teacher can give them an overview of learning objectives for the week (eventually for the month, if feasible). This will save time and indicate more responsibility for their own learning. This could be as simple as the following:

Grade 5 Mathematics
Objectives Week of 9/2
M-Develop skill with thermometer, keeping accurate records
T-Calculate percentages
W-Compare Fahrenheit and Celsius
R-Construct tables, charts, graphs
F-Combine, compare with "cricket" thermometer

3. Methods of Instruction

When planning the week, the teacher checks that plans include instructional methods which
a. encourage active learning within the varied setting of total class, the group, and the individual as well as
b. balance print and educational technology with the personal dimension.

4. Assignments

While planning the week, the teacher who is aware of student differences will list variations of the standard assignments for the slow and above-average, allowing individual or independent learning when warranted.

5. Other Opportunities

To add variety and to offer broad learning opportunities, the teacher will look for the following possibilities when constructing a weekly plan:

a. *Interdisciplinary*

As one means of doubling student exposure time to different subject areas, the teacher will identify interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Instead of using 60 minutes for art and 60 minutes for music weekly, for example, the teacher could combine art and music for 120 minutes weekly. During class time students could, for example, make expressive finger paintings to different musical moods or view slides of Renaissance art work to the accompaniment of Renaissance music.

b. *Excursions*

Teachers in small schools can utilize opportunities for flexibility and mobility, e.g., using the school/parish grounds as appropriate for lessons or scheduling field trips to farms or town businesses. As in any school setting, each excursion beyond the classroom has clear objectives and some followup activity upon return to the classroom.

c. *Service*

Because of the closely knit, relatively safe community surrounding most small schools, the teacher can look for opportunities in the weekly plan for youngsters to relate to and give service to their home, school, parish, and broader community; e.g., students can teach others to use a computer or display results of historical research within the local community.

d. *Cooperation*

The small number of teachers in the school can facilitate cooperative activities with other classes, e.g., using a Grade 3-4 art lesson on murals to help decorate for the Grade 7-8 display on sea life.

J. Setting the Day's Climate

To be available to set the classroom climate, the teacher has all equipment, material, and lesson plans required by the multi-grade room in place when the students arrive. That will free the teacher to focus on the students and their needs.

Although the concept of classroom climate is abstract, some concrete actions can be very supportive of a relaxed, enjoyable setting.

1. **Opening of day**

Here are some ideas to begin the day:

- greeting each student upon arrival — individually, by name;
- being available to disscuss any student needs — academic or non-academic;
- having some enjoyable pre-class interest areas that will involve groups of youngsters, such as small animals, toys that illustrate scientific principles, started jigsaw puzzles, etc.;

- opening the day with a hymn, music, or quiet reflection time;
- singing Happy Birthday to persons according to the birthday chart (and observing "half-birthdays" for those with birthdays in the summer)
- beginning with encouraging words for the day.

2. During the day

A small school can have a spirit of family — organized but not regimented. That spirit is tested especially at the beginning and end of activities. Because time is especially valuable in a multi-grade class, it is vital to use all moments well. The teacher should visualize in advance how organization without regimentation would affect occasions such as the following:

- leaving the room,
- using the bathroom,
- sharpening pencils,
- writing assignments,
- placing name and other information on assignments,
- collecting papers and distributing materials.

3. Closing of day

The closing of the day is another opportunity to continue the community support of the small school, sending each youngster home with a positive tone:

- praise for day's achievements and special acts of concern;
- a quiet time to thank God for the gifts of the day;
- a prayer — composed by a student who has been especially alert all day for appropriate prayer ideas;
- a moment to jot down items for the class's contribution to the school newsletter;
- the immediate posting of children's work on a specially prepared bulletin board — blank with only a border and title.

K. Adapting the Standard Lesson Plan

The teacher in the multi-grade classroom has been described as a juggler — getting one group into action, giving another some initial help, checking back with the first. . . .on and on throughout the day. Although effective lessons still need the same basic elements, the "juggler-teacher" will obviously have to handle them differently. Many such suggestions are included throughout this book; a few follow here:

1. Lesson Objectives and Related Values

Instead of teacher explanation, the lesson objectives including any related values to be learned may be merely written on the chalkboard or assignment cards, typed on an overview sheet, or briefly stated by the teacher. The students will need some management system to be certain they know their learning objectives and the work related to them.

In a one-room schoolhouse, the teacher gives a sheet with five weeks' work to all students working on the same level. The sheet indicates what objectives will require teaching or explanation; students can proceed with the rest, helping each other and asking for help as needed.

2. Learning Atmosphere

Instead of the teacher setting the learning atmosphere for a particular area, students can be sometimes expected to create their own learning set — using print or audio-visual introductions, peer discussion, a learning center, or their own ingenuity.

3. Materials

Effective instruction requires more than texts, workbooks, and ditto papers. In the small school — with its family spirit — everyone can help Grades 5-6 search for a variety of materials related to their lessons, e.g., World War I scrapbooks, recordings of historical radio announcements, real samples of wheat, barley, and milo. These may be displayed in the appropriate learning centers or kept on a special "Sharing" display table.

4. Equipment

Rather than watching films/videotapes or listening to audiotapes/records with the teacher, a small group may set up and view a film/videotape or a small group may use listening stations while the teacher works with another grade or group.

Videotaped presentations in specialized subjects such as music or art or Spanish can provide a "master teacher" for areas that may not be within the teacher's expertise. Computer programs — whether used to manage or to merely assist with instruction — can relieve the teacher (and student) of much tedious drill and practice.

5. Teaching/Learning Activities

Linking to students' experience and needs is a constant challenge in a room with many levels of students. Ideas to adapt learning activities to the multi-grade classroom follow below and in other parts of this publication. At times, the teacher who knows each student well can present the learning objective and challenge students to design their own activities to meet the objective.

6. Varying group activities

To avoid duplication — especially when each group knows what all other groups are doing (and can recall what the groups did last year) —tasks can be subdivided or differentiated in other ways for small groups or each individuals; e.g.,

- In science each (carefully planned) group can conduct a different experiment — not only conserving materials, but providing an opportunity where students can really listen and learn from each others' experiences.
- In religion each group (with leader and secretary) can study and discuss a specific subject and report to other members of the class.
- In language arts each group can interview class members and community persons on a specific question or topic, then present a news show, e.g., Dan Rather or Barbara Walters Presents....
- In mathematics each team can work at practicing basic number facts or equations or measures — with the task completed when all members have mastered the material.
- In reading each team can build vocabulary.

- In spelling pairs or teams can practice for unit tests or spelling bees.
- In social studies or language arts, students can enjoy a local history scavenger hunt — developed by the teacher, grandparents, students or a combination thereof.

7. Teaching of Concepts —

Because of the limited teacher time with each group, the teacher explanation or demonstration will be carefully planned and succinct.

Although the time is short, the teaching is concentrated — focusing on the core, then filling in the details.

The emphasis is on learning-centered activities — which fit the greater amount of student time and tend to increase long-term retention.

There is no need to use all the activities outlined in the manual or included in the student materials if the students have grasped the content and attained the skills. The teacher keeps in mind that the students will ordinarily hear a lesson two consecutive years in combined rooms and may require less direct teaching.

Occasionally a student or even a total class may prove sufficiently advanced to move to the textbook of the higher grade; if in accord with school policies and procedures, the option is acceptable. After all, many studies show that current textbooks reflect lowered expectations.

8. Interdisciplinary Approach

Not only to conserve time in the tight multi-grade schedule, but also to emphasize the relationships within areas of learning, the teacher of different subjects can often convert multiple curricular responsibilities into an asset, e.g.,

- using music to learn songs about multiplication tables;
- applying library and reference skills to social studies and science topics.

9. Involvement of Students

When the teacher is involved with other groups, discussions can be student-led and simple demonstrations student-conducted. In this way, the multi-grade classroom encourages student involvement, a proven asset to learning. Some ideas for methods that involve students are included in the section, "Locating Related Resources." Other ideas follow:

- Students can set up and use individual or small group listening activities for reading skills or literature, for phonics practice, spelling tests, dictionary and encyclopedia skills, for developing higher level thinking skills.

- Most youngsters can benefit from using student-administered kits or labs for reading comprehension, vocabulary, analogies, or other language skills.

10. Guided Practice

Practice of newly acquired knowledge or skills is essential. So too is some guidance lest the practice merely confirm some error. In the multi-grade classroom — although the teacher generally keeps moving among the students, observing their work — some of the guidance must come from answer keys, two-sided flash cards, computer programs, volunteers, and other students.

Many teachers eventually collect materials that clearly relate to learning objectives and attract students; e.g.,

- Students can fish (with magnets) in cans for math facts which are written on paper fish with staples.

- Many practice materials are available — including self-checking answers, e.g., flash cards, boards where the right answer lights up, home-made matching games, stories in plastic bags, computer programs which can vary the level of problem difficulty, etc.

- Teachers, volunteers, or students can make audiotapes of current spelling words or math facts — allowing time for the student to write the answer before giving the correct answer.

Much of this guided practice can occur during school time, using small group work or learning teams. It is also possible to tape and send home an explanation so parents or older siblings can help a youngster practice.

11. Checking for Understanding

Many small schools expect students to correct all their own work except tests which are usually handled by the teacher. Occasionally students can take spelling or other simple tests using audiotapes, then check their answers using either taped or printed answers. This self-checking — used because of less teacher availability — has the advantage of offering same-day response to the student rather than an overnight correction process.

When considering teacher-made testing, the Small Schools Study participants noted a major difference. When a small number of students are in each grade, teachers rarely write tests with many items which require only a brief student response. Instead they ordinarily ask brief open-ended questions which require the students to write longer answers. With few students per grade, teachers need not worry about correcting big stacks of the test.

As a result, according to Small Schools Study participants, students in the small school have fewer "fill in the blank," and "true-false" tests than their peers in the larger school. On the other hand, they get much more experience writing paragraphs, essays and other responses to open-ended questions.

With few students per grade, teachers in small schools also tend to give oral tests which provide student practice in speaking. In both written and oral forms, this type of teacher-made testing can help the students develop skill in thinking and expression.

To conserve teacher time and to involve parents in the learning process, some schools let students take spelling tests at home (with the parent's signature verifying the results). With few students per grade, the teacher knows each student well enough to know if the practice should occasionally be varied.

12. Reviewing and Summarizing Main Points

Beyond the ordinary review procedures, the family spirit of the small school could prompt game-type reviews, e.g.,

- tic/tac/toe using student-made review questions;
- Family Feud adapted to appropriate subject areas;
- board games with math facts;

- "Around the World"; in one version which the whole class can play, one student stands by the last seated student, the pair vie to answer a question quickly with the faster of the pair standing by the next student for another question. The object is for students to try to move "around the world" as far as possible from their starting point.

The small school setting has built-in advantages for reviewing. First of all, the testing is more likely to include summative-type items. In addition, the nature of the multi-grade classroom tends to offer a whole year of preview and/or review of main points.

13. Assigning Independent Practice

The smaller the classroom, the more likely the student's opportunity to work in pairs or teams and the more likely the chance that assignments will be more creative than paper-and-pencil work. Because of the community atmosphere, students sometimes can read revised stories to an audience in another classroom, direct an original play for the Home-School Association, or present some timely research on a local radio station.

L. Reassessing at Reporting Time

By report-card time, the teacher can wisely reassess several important components of the multi-grade classroom:

1. the composition of small groups;
2. the growth of individual students;
3. the value of specific learning pairs or teams;
4. the pairing within any tutoring program;
5. the arrangement of the classroom;
6. the need to update materials in learning centers;
7. the rotation of opportunities to develop leadership.

M. Meeting Parents and Community

The best time and place for a teacher to meet parents and other community members is often on the church steps, at the town baseball diamond, or helping at the parish picnic. On those occasions, teachers can learn about the community — its stores, crops, and livestock.

Student materials and projects can be displayed in the parish hall or in some local stores — with a special invitation for parents and parishioners to observe. If needed, large refrigerator boxes can provide extra display boards.

A teacher can often initiate parental support through a phone call or note which compliments the child on special effort. One faculty, which decided to make a positive phone call about each student during September, credited the practice for a year with extremely positive, cooperative parental relations. Occasional notes can also suggest how those at home may help a child with a specific problem.

N. Growing Professionally

Although schools ordinarily facilitate some inservice, the responsibility rests basically with the teacher to locate and utilize opportunities. Even in remote areas, some of the following opportunities are available:

1. diocesan inservice sessions and programs;
2. video and audio tape programs;
3. college/university courses;
4. a personal notebook with a list of professional books to read and ideas to pursue;
5. classroom observation, discussion, and sharing with those in similar positions, perhaps within a regional peer support group;
6. appropriate educational journals to keep abreast of new directions and materials;

7. opportunities to share in performing supervisory and administrative tasks within the school;

8. participation in growth-producing professional work, e.g., committees for textbook selection and visiting teams for school evaluation.

In actuality, any teacher who plans and effects the ideals included within this chapter — learning about the school, assessing the students, outlining the year's curriculum, and all the other elements —will have taken many steps along the road to professional growth.

Chapter V

Reaching Beyond the School

The small school has limitations of size — if it relies solely on the resources within its own doors. If, however, the school reaches beyond itself, it can involve community members, collaborate with other agencies, and win other supporters through a program of marketing and public relations.

This section includes approaches which are already utilized by many Catholic schools — both small and large. Because of their increased importance to the small school, the ideas are included here especially for the new principal and for the principal who is moving into the rural or small town — frequently the setting for the small school.

A. Involving Community Members

The small school has many reasons to take seriously the practical involvement of the persons in the broader community:

- The small school has fewer specialists and the broader community may offer additional specialists and learning resources.
- The small school has a narrower choice of nonacademic activities, and community members may be able to extend other opportunities for students' personal development.
- The small school which is located in a remote area may have difficulty securing qualified substitute teachers and may need to rely on prepared volunteers.
- The small school often has multi-grade classrooms, and persons in the community can assist with individual students or small groups.
- The smaller the number of students in a school, the more attractive is the setting to many potential volunteers.
- Most small Catholic schools need financial assistance, and personal involvement is often the first step toward greater financial contribution.

Areas for individual volunteers from the community are many. Some examples follow:

playground and cafeteria/lunchroom supervision
computer supervision and assistance
art lessons
music sessions
physical education classes
service as room mothers
assistance with seasonal dramatic programs
listening to reading
leadership of Great Books program
driving students to field trips
assistance with spelling units
testing individuals or small groups
conducting mini-courses, e.g.,
    demonstrating national customs
    teaching skills of gardening
    reading stories of the saints
    conducting story hours for younger students

supervising one grade of a combined classroom during library work
filling in when no substitute can be found
supervising during a videotape or film
following other directions from the teacher
helping with the lunch program — baking rolls, making cookies

How can a small school attract enough volunteers to meet its needs? Participants in the Small Schools Study suggest these approaches:

- By organizing a Volunteer Committee of the Home-School Association to identify potential volunteers;
- By building on the love of socializing on the part of many residents of rural areas and small towns, i.e., having a special luncheon for those considering volunteer service, a social following orientation for volunteers, etc.;
- By tapping the skill for making items by hand that is common in many rural areas and small towns, e.g., by inviting help in constructing computer tables or sewing covers for printers;
- By capitalizing on the special reverence for the older citizens in many rural areas and small towns by inviting them to share some special experience or expertise;
- By considering expanding the standard Home/School Association into a School/Community Association;
- By inviting an area college, if any is nearby, to send student teachers or pre-student teachers who can teach small groups or serve as aides;
- By inviting any area high school with a service program to help with individual students and small groups.

Because the educational and experiential level of persons in rural areas and small towns is often more limited than in larger settings, the school staff should be certain that any volunteers who work directly with children have the abilities and background required for their specific assignment.

As in any school, small school volunteers need some general preparation for their involvement. Because the small school will ordinarily prepare one or a few volunteer(s) at a time, the use of formal presentations is inappropriate. Many small schools find that an informal discussion with a simple handout is sufficient.

The key points for volunteers include the following:

1. the value of the volunteers' contributions to the learning and development of the students;
2. the importance of working under the supervision of a professional educator;
3. the required confidentiality, dress, and conduct;
4. the rationale for and examples of positive (rather than negative) approaches to group management and student motivation;
5. an overview of the instructional materials and techniques frequently used by volunteers in the school;
6. the location and use of needed equipment.

Community members, if invited, can share many skills with the school. In return, the school can build its relationship with those persons through reciprocal sharing with the broader community. Many examples of such sharing follow in the sections on collaboration and public relations.

B. Collaborating with Other Agencies

The rural/small town setting is a natural for open doors and cooperation. Some schools collaborate with neighboring schools, with other non-profit agencies, with commercial groups, with corporations, and with rural organizations. This cooperation not only builds the community climate, but also meets genuine needs of the school and/or the other agencies.

1. With neighboring schools

- By planning curriculum areas with neighboring faculties which have similar academic goals;
- By arranging cooperative purchase and use of textbooks with a neighboring school which also alternates grade levels of textbooks; e.g., one school buys Grades 5 and 7 science books, the other

purchases Grades 6 and 8 science texts, with the schools exchanging books at the end of every year;

- By sharing one full-time traveling instructional specialist with other area schools, i.e., agreeing who will contract the person, how all will contribute to the salary and benefits, who will schedule and supervise, who will provide lunch, etc.;
- By sharing information about possible substitutes and part-time teachers who can handle multi-grade classes;
- By requesting — with other area Catholic schools — that a group such as the Knights of Columbus contribute important resources that could be shared, e.g., materials for educating in human sexuality;
- By working with other Catholic school leaders in the area to plan Catholic Schools Week activities, appropriate teachers' inservice, etc.;
- By looking for other local buyers when a quantity purchase offers considerable discount;
- By pairing the school with another school to broaden student contacts and horizons through correspondence (and visits if possible).

2. With other non-profit groups

- By checking the possibility and practicality of programs as well as the use of facilities of other agencies, e.g., public school, public library, area Catholic high school
- By checking the availability and coordinating the scheduling of outside displays, materials, and presentations within the school on topics such as these:

    seeds and plants from the local garden club;
    drugs, alcohol, or child abuse from the community hospital;
    power from the electric company;
    area geography or safety from the state public service office;
    dental care, nutrition, or prevention of substance abuse from the county health agency;
    family counseling from mental health;
    the court system from the police department;
    bike safety from the sheriff's department,
    communications from the Lions Club;
    speech contests from the Optimist Club.

- By coordinating requests of the public library for sets of materials related to instructional units;
- By checking on the availability of a bookmobile if no public library is nearby;
- By determining which fund-raising efforts will be supported in a given year, including the various readathons or mathathons.
- By learning all services to which students are entitled in the public sector within their state and county;
- By inquiring about all tax-supported programs channeled through the public school, including health services and inservice opportunities, for which the students and teachers may be eligible.

3. **With commercial groups**

- By seeking an area sponsor for a spelling bee;
- By requesting no-cost instruction from bowling lanes, swimming pools, craft centers, and fine arts groups as a means of building interest and future clientele;
- By considering the use of commercial motivational offers, e.g., Book-It from Pizza Hut, Read to Succeed from Six Flags, contests from Woodman Insurance Company;
- By establishing a partnership between local businesses and school; two basic approaches are possible according to Warden (1986):
    a. simple — with the business providing funds and/or equipment for a school program while the school reciprocates by publicly giving credit to the business;
    b. long-term — with well defined purposes, in which both parties work closely together on programs; e.g., business people teach mini-courses, develop a career education program, provide on-the-job experiences.

4. **With corporations**

By fostering a partnership between a corporation and the school; Vermilion (1986) suggests these steps to initiate such a partnership:

a. Look around the community to see what companies are represented; talk with the manager about the corporate structure.

b. Write a brief letter to the company's public relations/community affairs department or to the corporate foundation, explaining interest in a grant partnership with the corporation, requesting information on their current giving programs and contact person. Refer the request to the local contact person.

c. If the information fits the school's needs, proceed. If not, write to the corporate grants manager, suggesting that the corporation consider a program that would allow the needed partnership.

5. **With rural organizations**

A Directory of Organizations and Programs in Rural Education from ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (Rios, 1986) lists the names, addresses, phone numbers, and functions of national organizations, national programs, regional organizations, regional programs, state organizations, state programs, university-based programs and journals that place a major emphasis on rural education and small schools. Such a list or a phone call to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (505-646-2623) can place a school in touch with needed resources.

C. Marketing and Public Relations

Because the small school rarely if ever can afford even a part-time public relations director, the school community should shape some simple, practical public relations efforts with the parents, the parish, the neighbors, and beyond. Some ideas follow:

1. **With the parents**

- Take time for parent orientation, explaining every student opportunity and every policy; consider asking every family to attend the session or to arrange a personal meeting with the principal.

- Consider sending occasional simple surveys, asking for ideas and explaining why any prior suggestions were not used.

- Try to identify "reasons" for leaving, e.g., sports programs in the larger public school junior high. In printed material, address areas

related to those reasons; e.g.,
sports — use photos of student games with an empty bench; the caption could emphasize the opportunity to play and develop;
social — print a photo of the senior high homecoming court, circling all of the school's graduates; the caption could note the high percentage of such elected honors earned by graduates;
faith — frame all such material within the perspective of faith and related values, stressing the importance of a supportive faith community during the formative years of early adolescence.

- Discuss whether an "at cost" extended-care option (7 a.m. to 6 p.m.) for students with working parents would be a useful and desired service.

- Be certain that all staff members realize the importance of talking with parents and listening to them.

- Avoid continued questioning about the future of the school; reflect stability.

- Develop a committee of the Home-School Association for communication, information, community building.

- Consider a Parent Appreciation Dinner prepared and served by the students.

2. **With the parish**

- The role of the Parish Board of Education is important; take time to orient the group to its roles related to public relations.

- The school should seek ways to meet the parish; often many members of the parish do not know the current school.

- As far as possible and desired, the school should try to meet the parish educational needs — becoming the parish educational center. The school can become an opportunity center for young and old alike — preschool care, services for the elderly, adult education, or whatever local needs are named by the parish community.

- The school should regularly use the parish bulletin, the local newspaper, and attractive brochures.

- The parish or school could consider offering adult education opportunities for those who support the school, e.g., computer literacy, using the "free university" concept in which persons can request the opportunity to learn anything or can offer to teach anything ranging from sign language to tax returns. Resources such as the small booklet by Killacky (1984) offer basic information and how-to suggestions concerning such ventures.

- The students should regularly pray for parishioners and parish needs. At special times, the students may wish to ask parishioners for prayer through individually written letters.
- Older students — as a grade or as a student organization — can plan activities with the senior citizens and assist them in setting up tables and chairs and in serving refreshments.
- If necessary, the clergy should be asked to consider the value of a Catholic school and to affirm it from the pulpit.
- The school can provide the Christmas pageant or serve as the choir on a particular Sunday of every month.
- The students can focus on the person-to-person approach. In one school, for example, students wore the theme, "SOS" (SomeOne Special), on buttons and T-shirts and made a point of greeting and smiling at every parishioner in sight, eventually inviting them to help paint rooms and to help cook for a special event.
- Occasionally a school could ask someone particularly convincing (e.g., the bishop) to preach at all Masses to open Catholic Schools Week.
- The school should constantly try to broaden the ownership of the school, opening the gym for family nights, etc.
- The invitation to Mission Day could be broadened. Even if it occurs during school hours, some other parishioners may wish to participate.
- Parents could be invited into school to see children use computers and to try their own hand.
- Parents and grandparents can be invited to see school science fairs and art exhibits — perhaps after Sunday Masses.
- Both the principal and the parish director of religious education should model cooperation.

3. With the neighbors

- The school should inform persons living near the school of school events, perhaps giving them a personal copy of the school calendar.

4. Beyond

- The school should spread the word about the achievement of students and their success in later schooling; when appropriate, brief congratulatory items could be placed in the church bulletin —noting the fact they are parish school graduates.
- The school should develop an attractive promotional brochure for area real estate offices and for local "bulletin board" areas in stores.
- In most areas, some people still support the 1950's and '60's concept that "Bigger is better." The small school should regularly present the advantages of small learning settings, using points such as those in this book or in the ERIC/CRESS digest, "Small Catholic Schools: An Endangered Species?" (Reck, 1988)
- The school should consider preparing a professional-looking newsletter which explains what the school is doing and why. Besides distributing this newsletter to parents, additional copies could be placed in church and other convenient spots around town.
- To be certain that other agencies know that the school exists, students should be encouraged to give service to worthy causes, e.g., helping the Red Cross feed the sand-baggers during the flood.
- Students can present shows or model their Halloween costumes for residents of nursing homes.
- Students can extend personal invitations to Grandparents' Day with Mass, lunch, and a short program which includes elements like "What my Grandparent means to me," a singalong, fiddle playing, dancing, and games. (To extend beyond Grandparents, this could become an Older American Dinner.)
- The school could send annual letters to alumni and friends — telling them about the school and asking for their support.

This reaching beyond the school — involving community members, collaborating with other agencies, and assuring a program of marketing and public relations — ultimately increases the visibility and support of the school within the broader community. This is important for all schools; it is absolutely essential for the small school that must reach beyond its limitations of size.

Chapter VI

Considering Implications

Some small Catholic schools have not survived the three-year duration of the Small Schools Study. The demise of these schools increases the urgency and strengthens the points found in the Small Schools Study. Where information is available, the closed schools fit at least one of the following descriptions:

- They avoided multi-grade classrooms, thereby requiring a below-average student/teacher ratio and an above-average per-student cost which exceeded available finances.
- They had not organized or taught in ways that capitalize on the potential of the small school.
- They lacked strong leaders (the principal, the pastor, and/or the diocesan education staff) who believed in the advantages of the small Catholic school.
- They did not communicate clearly the advantages and the achievements of the small Catholic school.

The research involved with the Small Schools Study has shown that few teacher training institutions prepare their graduates for the very small school. Basically the school must plan to prepare its own teachers.

The course is clear. The very small Catholic school, to be viable for the future, will need to do the following:

- accept and welcome its smallness and the advantages its size can offer students;
- recruit and train teachers who are willing and able to enjoy the challenge of the very small school;
- use multi-grade classrooms — aware of the academic growth, personal development, and community setting which that learning environment offers to students;
- capitalize on the opportunities and resources that exist beyond the school;
- communicate convincingly the advantages of the school and the achievements of the students.

The small Catholic elementary school which recognizes its advantages and proceeds to organize and teach in a manner that capitalizes on them can continue to offer its students many opportunities.

Appendix A

Participants in Regional Meetings

(By Invitation March 1987)

State Town/City	School	Participant
Michigan		
Alma	St. Mary	Ms. Mary Jo Fachting
Belding	St. Joseph	Sr. Mary Bertha
Brunswick	St. Michael	Sr. M Theresa Pelky
Chesaning	Our Lady Perpetual Help	Sr. Marlene Edwards
Dennison	St. Michael	Mr. David J. Bukala
Shepherd	St. Vincent de Paul	Sr. Annora Polega
Missouri		
Apple Creek	St. Joseph	Ms. Kathy First
Benton	St. Denis	Sr. Kathleen Bushur
Clinton	Holy Rosary	Ms. Bobbie Steinhauser
Fulton	St. Peter	Ms. Molly McGlone
Glennonville	St. Teresa	Sr. Gayle Marie Sims
Hillsboro	Good Shepherd	Mrs. Anna Chance
Macon	Immaculate Conception	Sr. Stephen Marie Glennon
Martinsburg	St. Joseph	Mrs. Kay Robnett
New Madrid	Immaculate Conception	Mr. Damian White
Ozora	Sacred Heart	Sr. Silveria Fricke
Pilot Grove	St. Joseph	Mrs. Joan Pangman
Portage deSioux	St. Francis	Sr. M. Rosita Purler
Portageville	St. Eustachius	Sr. M. Rosaria Acton
Rich Fountain	Sacred Heart	Ms. Linda K. Neuner
Zell	St. Joseph	Sr. Eulogia Jansen
Pennsylvania		
Everson	St. Joseph	Sr. M. DeChantal Serwinski
Greensburg	St. Benedict	Ms. Elizabeth M. Halula
McConnelsburg	St. Stephen	Ms. Margaret Von Hoene
West Virginia		
Weston	St. Patrick	Sr. Eileen Marie Sinnott
Wisconsin		
Campbellsport	Our Lady of Angels	Ms. Roselyn Baker
Francis Creek	St. Anne	Sr. Carol Mathe
Hatley	St. Florian	Mrs. Mary K. Dettmering
Kaukauna	St. Francis	Sr. St. Louis
Kellnersville	St. Joseph	Ms. Carole Witt Starck
Lena	St. Charles	Sr. Mary Robert Berg
Okauchee	St. Joan of Arc	Sr. Julie Wambach
Oneida	St. Joseph	Sr. Ann Mary Hart
Whitelaw	St. Michael	Mr. John G. Timmerman

Appendix B

Respondents to Questionnaire
(January, 1986)

Note: Any schools in which enrollments exceeded 100 students have been omitted from this listing and from the study.

State	Town/City	School
Alaska	Kodiak	St. Mary
Arkansas	Benton	Our Lady of Fatima
	Blytheville	Immaculate Conception
	Rogers	St. Vincent de Paul
	Russellville	St. John
California	Crescent City	St. Joseph
	Patterson	Sacred Heart Primary
Colorado	Durango	St. Columba
	Glenwood Springs	St. Stephen
	Salida	St. Joseph
Connecticut	Hartford	Cedar Court
Florida	Leesburg	St. Paul
	Marathon	San Pablo
Illinois	Belvidere	St. James
	East Dubuque	Nativity
	East St. Louis	Immaculate Conception
	Gillespie	Ss. Simon & Jude
	Hecker	St. Augustine of Canterbury
	Manhattan	St. Joseph
	Nauvoo	Ss. Peter & Paul
	New Athens	St. Agatha
	New Berlin	St. Mary
	Philo	St. Thomas
	Quincy	St. Boniface
	Radom	St. Michael
Indiana	Alexandria	St. Mary
	Brazil	Annunciation
	Clinton	Sacred Heart
	Goshen	St. John Evangelist

State	Town/City	School
Indiana (cont.)	Guilford	St. Paul—New Alsace
	Hartford City	St. John Riedman Memorial
	Seymour	St. Ambrose
	Tipton	St. John the Baptist
	Yoder	St. Aloysius
Iowa	Clare	St. Matthew
	Creston	St. Malachy
	Early	Sacred Heart
	Granger	Assumption
	Neola	St. Joseph
	Riverside	St. Mary of Assumption
Kansas	Abilene	St. Andrew
	Augusta	St. James
	Hanover	St. John
	Haysville	St. Cecilia
	McPherson	St. Joseph
	Nashville	St. Leo
Kentucky	Augusta	St. Augustine
	California	Ss. Peter & Paul
	Camp Springs	St. Joseph
	Louisville	St. Matthias
	Melbourne	St. Philip
	Owensboro	St. Mary Magdalene
	Pikeville	St. Francis of Assisi
	Uniontown	St. Agnes
Maine	Sabattus	Our Lady of the Rosary
Maryland	Westernport	St. Peter
Michigan	Alma	St. Mary
	Belding	St. Joseph
	Brunswick	St. Michael
	Cedar	Holy Rosary
	Chesaning	Our Lady of Perpetual Help
	Dennison	St. Michael
	Gladwin	Sacred Heart
	Harbor Springs	Holy Childhood
	Marquette	St. Christopher
	Ruth	Ss. Peter & Paul
	Shepherd	St. Vincent de Paul
	Wayland	St. Therese

State	Town/City	School
Minnesota	Argyle	St. Rose of Lima
	Easton	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
	Hampton	St. Mary
	Kimball	Holy Cross of Pearl Lake
	Leavenworth	Japanese Martyrs
	New Ulm	St. George
	Owatonna	St. Isidore
	Saint Cloud	St. Mary Cathedral
Missouri	Apple Creek	St. Joseph
	Benton	St. Denis
	Bonne Terre	St. Joseph
	Campbell	St. Teresa
	Clinton	Holy Rosary
	Flinthill	St. Theodore
	Frankenstein	St. Mary
	Fulton	St. Peter
	Hillsboro	Good Shepherd
	Macon	Immaculate Conception
	Marceline	McCartan Memorial
	Martinsburg	St. Joseph
	New Haven	Assumption
	New Madrid	Immaculate Conception
	Ozora	Sacred Heart
	Pilot Grove	St. Joseph
	Portage deSioux	St. Francis
	Portageville	St. Eustachius
	Rich Fountain	Sacred Heart
	Vienna Visitation	Interparish
	Wentzville	St. Joseph
	Zell	St. Joseph
Montana	Glendive	Sacred Heart
	Saint Xavier	Pretty Eagle Catholic School
Nebraska	Atkinson	St. Joseph
	Emerson	Sacred Heart
	Lawrence	Sacred Heart
	Omaha	St. Ann
	Stuart	St. Boniface
	Wayne	St. Mary
	Winnebago	St. Augustine Indian Mission
New Mexico	Silver City	Santa Rita Learning Center
New York	Holley	St. Mary
	Warsaw	St. Michael

State	Town/City	School
North Dakota	Richardton	St. Mary
	Walhalla	St. Boniface
Ohio	Byesville	Holy Trinity
	Churchtown	St. John
	Cincinnati	St. Aloysius Educational Center
	Custar	St. Louis
	Logan	St. John the Evangelist
	Payne	St. John Baptist
	Waynesburg	St. James
Oklahoma	Kingfisher	Ss. Peter & Paul
	Okarche	Holy Trinity
	Tulsa	St. Catherine
Oregon	Forest Grove	Visitation
	Portland	St. Francis Assisi
Pennsylvania	Everson	St. Joseph
	Greensburg	St. Benedict
	McConnellsburg	St. Stephen
	McKeesport	St. Nicholas
	Minersville	Ss. Peter & Paul
	Philadelphia	St. Ladislaus
	Steelton	Assumption
South Dakota	Kranzburg	Holy Rosary
Tennessee	Kingsport	St. Dominic
	Loretto	Sacred Heart
Texas	Bremond	St. Mary
	Granter	Ss. Cyril & Methodius
Vermont	Beecher Falls	St. Albert
Washington	Colton	Guardian Angel-St. Boniface
	Seattle	Blessed Sacrament
	Spokane	St. Paschal
West Virginia	Benwood	Ss. James & John
	Weston	St. Patrick

State	Town/City	School
Wisconsin	Cambellsport	Our Lady of Angels
	Cazenovia	St. Anthony
	Cochrane	St. Boniface
	De Pere	Immaculate Conception
	Dodgeville	St. Joseph
	Durand	Holy Rosary
	Eagle River	St. Peter the Fisherman
	Francis Creek	St. Anne
	Hatley	St. Florian
	Horicon	St. Malachy
	Kaukauna	St. Francis
	Kellnersville	St. Joseph
	Lena	St. Charles
	Manitowoc	St. Boniface
	Manitowoc	St. Joseph
	Middleton	St. Peter
	Norwalk	St. Mary Ridge
	Okauchee	St. Joan of Arc
	Oneida	St. Joseph
	Polonia	Sacred Heart
	Union Grove	St. John the Baptist
	Whitelaw	St. Michael

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